



Aviation Investigation Final Report

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|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| Location: | DAYTON VALLEY, Nevada | Accident Number: | LAX01LA030 |
| Date & Time: | October 31, 2000, 17:46 Local | Registration: | N8139A |
| Aircraft: | Piper PA-32R-301 | Aircraft Damage: | Substantial |
| Defining Event: | | Injuries: | 2 None |
| Flight Conducted Under: | Part 91: General aviation | | |

Analysis

While attempting to land, the airplane collided with desert brush short of the runway shearing off the nose landing gear, damaging both wings, and twisting the fuselage. Arrival at the airport was after sunset. The airport does not have runway lights available for night flights. The pilot indicated that he oriented himself to the runway utilizing the surrounding ground lighting and lights from the company's open hangar. On final approach during the first landing, the pilot initiated a go-around because he was not set up properly and did not like the visual reference of the approach. On the second approach he lined up with what he believed was the centerline of the runway. He looked down to verify that the landing gear extended lights were illuminated. When he looked back outside, his vision was obscured. Another go-around was initiated; however, the airplane touched down. The pilot heard a loud noise and then saw the desert brush. The pilot reported there were no mechanical anomalies with the airplane. Official sunset was at 1703.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's failure to attain a proper glide path during the final approach resulting in an undershoot of the runway. Factors were the lack of runway lights and night lighting condition.

Findings

Occurrence #1: UNDERSHOOT
Phase of Operation: APPROACH - VFR PATTERN - FINAL APPROACH

Findings

1. (C) PROPER GLIDEPATH - NOT ATTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (C) DISTANCE/ALTITUDE - MISJUDGED - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) AIRPORT FACILITIES,RUNWAY EDGE LIGHTS - NOT INSTALLED
4. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - DUSK

Factual Information

On October 31, 2000, at 1746 hours Pacific standard time, a Piper PA-32R-301, N8139A, undershot the runway and collided with desert brush at the Dayton Valley Airpark Airport, Dayton Valley, Nevada. The airplane, operated by Aero Leasing, d.b.a. Union Flights, under the provisions of 14 CFR Part 91, sustained substantial damage. The commercial pilot and pilot rated passenger were not injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the business flight that departed the Redding Municipal Airport, Redding, California, at 1645, and no flight plan was filed. The flight was scheduled to terminate at the Dayton Valley Airpark.

In an interview with a Safety Board investigator, the pilot stated that he and the passenger, who is a mechanic for Union Flights, had flown to Redding earlier in the day to work on a company airplane. No abnormalities were noted on the flight to Redding or the return trip to Dayton. He noted that the arrival to Dayton was after sunset, and reported that the airport does not have lighting.

In the pilot's written statement to the Safety Board, he reported that he oriented himself to runway 23 utilizing the surrounding ground lighting and lights from the company's open hangar. He indicated that he did not like what he saw on the first approach and initiated a go-around. On final for the second approach, at 200 feet above ground level (agl), he verified that there was a three green light indication on the instrument panel, confirming that the landing gear was in the down and locked position. When he looked outside he stated that the "lights were fuzzy and not sharp." He thought he had flown through a dust cloud. The next thing he remembered was the passenger stating that they had just crashed. The pilot further reported that the weather was clear and the winds were calm.

According to a Sun and Moon program utilized by the Safety Board, official sunset was 1703.

Pilot Information

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|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Certificate: | Commercial; Flight instructor | Age: | 66, Male |
| Airplane Rating(s): | Single-engine land; Multi-engine land | Seat Occupied: | Left |
| Other Aircraft Rating(s): | None | Restraint Used: | |
| Instrument Rating(s): | Airplane | Second Pilot Present: | No |
| Instructor Rating(s): | Airplane multi-engine; Airplane single-engine; Instrument airplane | Toxicology Performed: | No |
| Medical Certification: | Class 2 Valid Medical-w/ waivers/lim | Last FAA Medical Exam: | October 31, 2000 |
| Occupational Pilot: | Yes | Last Flight Review or Equivalent: | |
| Flight Time: | 6185 hours (Total, all aircraft), 152 hours (Total, this make and model), 5967 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 101 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 46 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft) | | |

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

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|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Aircraft Make: | Piper | Registration: | N8139A |
| Model/Series: | PA-32R-301 PA-32R-301 | Aircraft Category: | Airplane |
| Year of Manufacture: | | Amateur Built: | |
| Airworthiness Certificate: | Normal | Serial Number: | 32R801013040 |
| Landing Gear Type: | Retractable - Tricycle | Seats: | 6 |
| Date/Type of Last Inspection: | August 19, 2000 Annual | Certified Max Gross Wt.: | 3600 lbs |
| Time Since Last Inspection: | | Engines: | 1 Reciprocating |
| Airframe Total Time: | | Engine Manufacturer: | Lycoming |
| ELT: | Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident | Engine Model/Series: | IO-540-K165D |
| Registered Owner: | AERO LEASING | Rated Power: | 300 Horsepower |
| Operator: | | Operating Certificate(s) Held: | None |
| Operator Does Business As: | UNION FLIGHTS | Operator Designator Code: | UNF |

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

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|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Conditions at Accident Site: | Visual (VMC) | Condition of Light: | Dusk |
| Observation Facility, Elevation: | RNO ,4412 ft msl | Distance from Accident Site: | 21 Nautical Miles |
| Observation Time: | 17:56 Local | Direction from Accident Site: | 160° |
| Lowest Cloud Condition: | Scattered / 15000 ft AGL | Visibility | 10 miles |
| Lowest Ceiling: | Broken / 25000 ft AGL | Visibility (RVR): | |
| Wind Speed/Gusts: | 6 knots / | Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Wind Direction: | 330° | Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Altimeter Setting: | 30 inches Hg | Temperature/Dew Point: | 47°C / 19°C |
| Precipitation and Obscuration: | No Obscuration; No Precipitation | | |
| Departure Point: | REDDING , CA (RDD) | Type of Flight Plan Filed: | Company VFR |
| Destination: | (A34) | Type of Clearance: | VFR |
| Departure Time: | 16:45 Local | Type of Airspace: | Class G |

Airport Information

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|-----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Airport: | DAYTON VALLEY AIRPARK A34 | Runway Surface Type: | Asphalt |
| Airport Elevation: | 4412 ft msl | Runway Surface Condition: | Dry |
| Runway Used: | 23 | IFR Approach: | None |
| Runway Length/Width: | 5351 ft / 75 ft | VFR Approach/Landing: | Full stop;Traffic pattern |

Wreckage and Impact Information

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|----------------------------|--------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Crew Injuries: | 1 None | Aircraft Damage: | Substantial |
| Passenger Injuries: | 1 None | Aircraft Fire: | None |
| Ground Injuries: | N/A | Aircraft Explosion: | None |
| Total Injuries: | 2 None | Latitude, Longitude: | 39.259483,-119.479591(est) |

Administrative Information

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|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Investigator In Charge (IIC): | Cornejo, Tealeye |
| Additional Participating Persons: | DON MORGAN; RENO , NV |
| Original Publish Date: | November 6, 2001 |
| Last Revision Date: | |
| Investigation Class: | Class |
| Note: | The NTSB traveled to the scene of this accident. |
| Investigation Docket: | https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=50569 |

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person” (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available [here](#).