



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Valparaiso, Indiana	Accident Number:	CHI02LA109
Date & Time:	April 19, 2002, 12:18 Local	Registration:	N3034A
Aircraft:	Piper PA-32RT-300T	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

While on initial climb after takeoff the airplane encountered windshear and the airplane stalled, subsequently impacting the terrain. The pilot reported the takeoff and initial climb were normal until approximately 300 feet above ground level when the airplane encountered "severe turbulence, causing left turn and loss of lift." The pilot stated the engine was producing "full power" when the airplane impacted the terrain. The winds were 020 degrees magnetic at 12 knots, with gusts of 17 knots.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot not maintaining aircraft control while encountering windshear during initial climbout, resulting in a stall at a low altitude.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT

Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - INITIAL CLIMB

Findings

1. (C) WEATHER CONDITION - WINDSHEAR
2. (C) AIRCRAFT CONTROL - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (C) STALL - ENCOUNTERED - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (C) ALTITUDE - LOW

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

5. TERRAIN CONDITION - GROUND

Factual Information

On April 19, 2002, at 1218 central daylight time, a Piper PA-32RT-300T, N3034A, piloted by a private pilot, sustained substantial damage during an in-flight collision with the terrain following a loss of control while on initial climb after takeoff. The airplane had departed runway 36 (4,000 feet by 75 feet, dry/asphalt) at the Porter County Airport (VPZ), Valparaiso, Indiana. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time of the accident. The flight was operating under the provisions of 14 CFR Part 91 on an instrument flight rules (IFR) flight plan. The pilot and his passenger sustained serious injuries. The flight was originating at the time of the accident and had the intended destination of the Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport, Detroit, Michigan.

According to the pilot's written statement, the takeoff and initial climb were normal until approximately 300 feet above ground level when the airplane encountered "severe turbulence, causing left turn and loss of lift." The pilot stated the engine was producing "full power" when the airplane impacted the terrain.

A weather observation station, located at VPZ, recorded the weather around the time of the accident as:

Observation Time: 1220 cdt
Wind: 020 degrees magnetic at 12 knots, Gusts 17 knots
Visibility: 10 statute miles
Sky Condition: Sky Clear
Temperature: 16 degrees Celsius
Dew Point: 09 degrees Celsius
Pressure: 30.03 inches of mercury

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	53, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical-w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	December 27, 2000
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	February 16, 2002
Flight Time:	1400 hours (Total, all aircraft), 500 hours (Total, this make and model), 1350 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 30 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 10 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 0 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N3034A
Model/Series:	PA-32RT-300T	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	32R-7987020
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	6
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	May 1, 2001 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3600 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	150 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	2605 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Textron Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	TIO-540-SIAD
Registered Owner:	Turbo Flite, LLC	Rated Power:	300 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	VPZ,771 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	0 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	12:20 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	12 knots / 17 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	20°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.03 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	16°C / 9°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Valparaiso, IN (VPZ)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	IFR
Destination:	Detroit, MI (DTW)	Type of Clearance:	IFR
Departure Time:	12:18 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	Porter County Municipal VPZ	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	771 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	36	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	4000 ft / 75 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	41.453887,-87.006942

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	FOX, TODD
Additional Participating Persons:	Harold Jones; Federal Aviation Administration - South Bend FSDO; South Bend, IN Gregory Erikson; Textron Lycoming; Wayne, IL Robert Martellotti; The New Piper Aircraft, Inc.; Vero Beach, FL
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Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=54584

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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](#).