



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Buena Vista, Colorado	Accident Number:	DEN03LA048
Date & Time:	March 11, 2003, 12:00 Local	Registration:	N78559
Aircraft:	Piper PA-12	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

A witness said the airplane was departing on runway 15, and exited the left side of the runway and subsequently descended a steep 100 foot embankment resulting in damage to the left wing and fuselage. The pilot said that a "gust of wind hit me just as I was lifting off." The local meteorologist said that the wind was 210 to 270 degrees at 15 knots and gusts to 21 knots..

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the pilot's failure to maintain aircraft control. Contributing factors were the crosswind weather condition and gusty wind condition.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - INITIAL CLIMB

Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - CROSSWIND
2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - GUSTS
3. (C) AIRCRAFT CONTROL - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - INITIAL CLIMB

Findings

4. TERRAIN CONDITION - DITCH

Factual Information

On March 11, 2003, at approximately 1200 mountain standard time, a Piper PA-12, N78559, was substantially damaged during takeoff from Central Colorado Regional Airport, Buena Vista, Colorado. The private pilot, the sole occupant in the airplane, was not injured. The airplane was being operated under Title 14 CFR Part 91. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the cross-country flight that was originating at the time of the accident. The pilot had not filed a flight plan.

A witness said the airplane was departing on runway 15, and exited the left side of the runway and went down a steep 100 foot embankment. The pilot said that a "gust of wind hit me just as I was lifting off." The local meteorologist said that the wind was 210 to 270 degrees 15 knots, gusting to 21 knots. The airplane's left wing was bent down, and the fuselage was bent and twisted.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	63, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical-w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	October 8, 2002
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	June 2, 2002
Flight Time:	491 hours (Total, all aircraft), 358 hours (Total, this make and model), 355 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N78559
Model/Series:	PA-12	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	N78559
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	October 12, 2002 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1750 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	5 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	1449 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	O-320
Registered Owner:	Open a Flying Services Inc.	Rated Power:	150 Horsepower
Operator:	John M. Cogswell	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	LXV,9000 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	32 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	12:00 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	325°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 9000 ft AGL	Visibility	30 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	15 knots / 21 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	240°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.92 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	13°C / -7°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	BUENA VISTA, CO (7V1)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	DENVER, CO (APA)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	12:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	BUENA VISTA MUNI Arpt 7V1	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	7946 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	15	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	8300 ft / 75 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	38.814167,-106.120834

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Struhsaker, James
Additional Participating Persons:	Gary W Dupertuis; FAA FSDO; Denver, CO
Original Publish Date:	November 25, 2003
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=56613

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