



Aviation Investigation Final Report

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|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| Location: | The Sea Ranch, California | Accident Number: | LAX04CA242 |
| Date & Time: | June 17, 2004, 12:30 Local | Registration: | N93AZ |
| Aircraft: | Vans Aircraft RV-9A | Aircraft Damage: | Substantial |
| Defining Event: | | Injuries: | 2 None |
| Flight Conducted Under: | Part 91: General aviation - Personal | | |

Analysis

The airplane impacted trees during an aborted landing. On final approach, with the airplane on runway centerline, the pilot encountered turbulence. Upon touchdown, the airplane bounced and veered to the left. As the airplane approached the left edge of the runway, the pilot opted to abort the landing. After the airplane became airborne, it encountered a gust of wind and continued the left drift. About 10 feet above ground level, the airplane impacted trees that bordered the left side of the runway. A witness reported to the pilot, that he felt a gust of wind while watching the airplane collide with the surrounding trees. The pilot reported no preimpact mechanical malfunctions or failures with the airplane.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the pilot's inadequate compensation for gusty crosswind conditions and failure to maintain proper runway alignment, resulting in a collision with trees.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: LANDING - ABORTED

Findings

1. WEATHER CONDITION - GUSTS
2. WEATHER CONDITION - CROSSWIND

3. (C) COMPENSATION FOR WIND CONDITIONS - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. OBJECT - TREE(S)
5. (C) PROPER ALIGNMENT - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

On June 17, 2004, about 1230 Pacific daylight time, a Vans RV-9A, N93AZ, impacted trees during an aborted landing at The Sea Ranch Airport, The Sea Ranch, California. The pilot/owner was operating the airplane under the provisions of 14 CFR Part 91. The private pilot and one passenger were not injured; the airplane sustained substantial damage. The personal cross-country flight departed Gustine Airport, Gustine, California, about 1115, with a planned destination of The Sea Ranch. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and a flight plan had not been filed.

In a written statement, the pilot reported that he was attempting to land on runway 30. He reported that the windsocks at the airport were all in different positions, indicating that the winds were variable. On final approach, with the airplane on runway centerline, he encountered turbulence. Upon touchdown, the airplane drifted to the left and he initiated a go-around by applying full power and retracting flaps. During the initial climb out, the airplane continued to the left, and the pilot attempted to counteract the drift. About 10 feet above ground level, the airplane impacted trees that bordered the left side of the runway.

During a telephone conversation with a National Transportation Safety Board investigator, the pilot reported that upon touchdown, the airplane bounced and veered to the left. As the airplane approached the left edge of the runway, he opted to abort the landing. He added full power and began to retract the flaps in an effort to gain altitude. After the airplane became airborne, it encountered a gust of wind. The airplane flipped over on the left side and impacted trees.

The pilot further noted that after the accident he talked to a witness on the ground. The witness told him that he felt a gust of wind from a southwesterly direction as he watched the airplane collide with the surrounding trees. The airplane incurred damage to the propeller, nose gear, tail, and fuselage. The pilot reported no preimpact mechanical malfunctions or failures with the airplane.

Pilot Information

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|----------------------------------|---|--|-----------------|
| Certificate: | Private | Age: | 55, Male |
| Airplane Rating(s): | Single-engine land | Seat Occupied: | |
| Other Aircraft Rating(s): | None | Restraint Used: | |
| Instrument Rating(s): | None | Second Pilot Present: | |
| Instructor Rating(s): | | Toxicology Performed: | No |
| Medical Certification: | Class 3 | Last FAA Medical Exam: | October 1, 2003 |
| Occupational Pilot: | | Last Flight Review or Equivalent: | |
| Flight Time: | 165 hours (Total, all aircraft), 62 hours (Total, this make and model), 160 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 30 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 10 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 6 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft) | | |

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

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|--------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Aircraft Make: | Vans Aircraft | Registration: | N93AZ |
| Model/Series: | RV-9A | Aircraft Category: | Airplane |
| Year of Manufacture: | | Amateur Built: | Yes |
| Airworthiness Certificate: | Experimental (Special) | Serial Number: | 90017 |
| Landing Gear Type: | Tricycle | Seats: | |
| Date/Type of Last Inspection: | | Certified Max Gross Wt.: | |
| Time Since Last Inspection: | | Engines: | 1 Reciprocating |
| Airframe Total Time: | | Engine Manufacturer: | Lycoming |
| ELT: | | Engine Model/Series: | O-320-DIA |
| Registered Owner: | Martin Pierre | Rated Power: | |
| Operator: | | Operating Certificate(s) Held: | None |

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

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|---|--------------------------|---|---------|
| Conditions at Accident Site: | Visual (VMC) | Condition of Light: | Day |
| Observation Facility, Elevation: | | Distance from Accident Site: | |
| Observation Time: | | Direction from Accident Site: | |
| Lowest Cloud Condition: | | Visibility | |
| Lowest Ceiling: | | Visibility (RVR): | |
| Wind Speed/Gusts: | / | Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Wind Direction: | | Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Altimeter Setting: | | Temperature/Dew Point: | |
| Precipitation and Obscuration: | | | |
| Departure Point: | Gustine, CA (301) | Type of Flight Plan Filed: | None |
| Destination: | The Sea Ranch, CA (CA51) | Type of Clearance: | None |
| Departure Time: | | Type of Airspace: | Class E |

Airport Information

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|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|------|
| Airport: | The Sea Ranch Airport CA51 | Runway Surface Type: | |
| Airport Elevation: | | Runway Surface Condition: | |
| Runway Used: | 30 | IFR Approach: | None |
| Runway Length/Width: | | VFR Approach/Landing: | |

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: | |
| Total Injuries: | 2 None | Latitude, Longitude: | 38.704723,-123.432502 |

Administrative Information

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| Investigator In Charge (IIC): | Plagens, Howard |
| Additional Participating Persons: | Dennis Pollard; Federal Aviation Administration; Oakland, CA |
| Original Publish Date: | September 1, 2004 |
| Last Revision Date: | |
| Investigation Class: | Class |
| Note: | This accident report documents the factual circumstances of this accident as described to the NTSB. |
| Investigation Docket: | https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=59458 |

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](#).