



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Somerville, New Jersey	Accident Number:	NYC06CA177
Date & Time:	July 16, 2006, 00:15 Local	Registration:	N5363P
Aircraft:	Beech A36	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

As the airplane approached the destination airport at night, the pilot cancelled his instrument flight rules (IFR) flight plan. On final approach, the pilot lost visual contact with the runway environment when the airplane entered a "dense ground fog bank" approximately 100 feet above ground level and 1/4 mile from the runway threshold. The pilot was "blinded" by the reflection of the airplane's landing light in the fog, initiated a go-around, but the airplane struck a tree and impacted terrain seconds later. The pilot stated that he obtained the current Automated Surface Observing System (ASOS) report minutes prior to the accident, and the field was "within VFR parameters." The pilot was also aware of the possibility of ground fog. The meteorological aerodrome report (METAR) for the time of the accident included 1 mile visibility in fog, with vertical visibility of 100 feet. The METARs for the preceding 4 hours showed the visibility to be equal or less than 2 miles due to fog and mist.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's continued flight into known adverse weather.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER
Phase of Operation: APPROACH - VFR PATTERN - FINAL APPROACH

Findings

1. (C) FLIGHT INTO KNOWN ADVERSE WEATHER - CONTINUED - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. WEATHER CONDITION - FOG

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT

Phase of Operation: APPROACH - VFR PATTERN - FINAL APPROACH

Findings

3. OBJECT - TREE(S)

Factual Information

As the Beech A36 approached the destination airport at night, the pilot cancelled his instrument flight rules (IFR) flight plan. On final approach, the pilot lost visual contact with the runway environment when the airplane entered a "dense ground fog bank" approximately 100 feet above ground level and 1/4 mile from the runway threshold. The pilot was "blinded" by the reflection of the airplane's landing light in the fog, initiated a go-around, but the airplane struck a tree and impacted terrain seconds later. The pilot stated that he obtained the current Automated Surface Observing System (ASOS) report minutes prior to the accident, and the field was "within VFR parameters." The pilot was also aware of the possibility of ground fog. The meteorological aerodrome report (METAR) for the time of the accident included 1 mile visibility in fog, with vertical visibility of 100 feet. The METARs for the preceding 4 hours showed the visibility to be equal or less than 2 miles due to fog and mist.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline transport; Commercial	Age:	54, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Glider	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	August 1, 2005
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	May 1, 2006
Flight Time:	2875 hours (Total, all aircraft), 2300 hours (Total, this make and model), 2650 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 17 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 9 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Beech	Registration:	N5363P
Model/Series:	A36	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Utility	Serial Number:	E 980
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	6
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	February 1, 2006 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3600 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	4100 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Teledyne Continental
ELT:	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	IO-520 BB
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	285 Horsepower
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument (IMC)	Condition of Light:	Night
Observation Facility, Elevation:	ksmq,105 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	0 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	00:18 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	100 ft AGL	Visibility	1 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Indefinite (V V) / 100 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	3 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	290°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.93 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	22°C / 21°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	N/A - None - Fog		
Departure Point:	East Hampton, NY (KHTO)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	IFR
Destination:	Somerville, NJ (KSMQ)	Type of Clearance:	IFR
Departure Time:	22:45 Local	Type of Airspace:	

Airport Information

Airport:	Somerset Airport KSMQ	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	105 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	12	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	3000 ft / 75 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Traffic pattern

Wreckage and Impact Information

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:	40.626667,-74.669998

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Rayner, Brian
Additional Participating Persons:	Arnie Roholt; Allentown
Original Publish Date:	October 3, 2006
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.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=64116

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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](#).