



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	DURANGO, Colorado	Accident Number:	DEN82DA185
Date & Time:	September 4, 1982, 14:52 Local	Registration:	N98872
Aircraft:	PIPER J-3 C65	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

THE PILOT REPORTED THAT HE TOOK OFF WITH THE DOORS LATCHED OPEN, AND AFTER LIFT-OFF, THE AIRCRAFT FAILED TO EXCEED 42 MPH. HE REPORTED THAT AN ALTITUDE OF ABOUT 150 FT WAS ATTAINED. DUE TO THE LACK OF PERFORMANCE AND FEARFUL OF OBSTRUCTIONS AHEAD, THE PILOT BEGAN A BROAD, FLAT 180 DEGREE RETURN TO THE FIELD. DURING THE TURN, THE AIRCRAFT STALLED AND STRUCK THE GROUND. THE ELEVATION OF THE CRASH SITE WAS ABOUT 6530 FT AND THE REPORTED TEMPERATURE WAS 82 DEGREES. THE AIRCRAFT WAS EQUIPPED WITH A 65 HORSEPOWER ENGINE.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING - TURN TO REVERSE DIRECTION

Findings

1. (C) PREFLIGHT PLANNING/PREPARATION - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - HIGH DENSITY ALTITUDE
3. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - HIGH OBSTRUCTION(S)
4. MANEUVER - ATTEMPTED - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. (C) AIRSPEED - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND

6. (C) STALL - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	58, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Unknown
Other Aircraft Rating(s):		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:	May 28, 1981
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	1831 hours (Total, all aircraft), 30 hours (Total, this make and model), 1800 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 45 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	PIPER	Registration:	N98872
Model/Series:	J-3 C65 J-3 C65	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:		Serial Number:	19128
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Unknown	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1220 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	15 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	6000 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	CONTINENTAL
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	A-65
Registered Owner:	STEVEN J. STONEHOUSE	Rated Power:	65 Horsepower
Operator:	STEVEN J. STONEHOUSE	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

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:	Clear	Visibility	15 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Unknown	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	5 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	0°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	82°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	DURANGO , CO	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	DURANGO , CO	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	14:45 Local	Type of Airspace:	

Airport Information

Airport:	PRIVATE AIRSTRIP	Runway Surface Type:	Grass/turf
Airport Elevation:	0 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	36	IFR Approach:	
Runway Length/Width:	3200 ft / 0 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Traffic pattern

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:	37.270717,-107.880928(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):

Additional Participating Persons:

Original Publish Date: September 4, 1983

Last Revision Date:

Investigation Class: [Class](#)

Note:

Investigation Docket: <https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=70527>

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](#).