



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

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<b>Location:</b>	Frazier Park, California	<b>Accident Number:</b>	WPR11LA318
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	July 8, 2011, 13:15 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N4901Z
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Piper PA-22-108	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>	Nose over/nose down	<b>Injuries:</b>	2 None
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

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## Analysis

The pilot reported that, during the flight, he was following an interstate highway and that he then turned west to intercept a state highway and head toward his destination. He was flying about 1,000 feet above mountainous terrain when he became lost and disoriented while trying to navigate using maps and GPS. He then thought that the airplane was losing altitude. Subsequently, he concentrated on the terrain rather than direction, decided to make an off-airport landing, and landed the airplane in a dry river bottom. During the landing roll, the nosewheel dug into soft dirt, and the airplane nosed over. Postaccident engine and airframe examinations revealed no evidence of preimpact mechanical malfunctions or failures that would have precluded normal operation.

## Probable Cause and Findings

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

The pilot's geographic disorientation, which resulted in an off-airport precautionary landing in soft terrain and a subsequent nose over.

## Findings

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<b>Personnel issues</b>	Use of charts - Pilot
<b>Personnel issues</b>	Geographic disorient (lost) - Pilot
<b>Environmental issues</b>	Soft surface - Contributed to outcome

## Factual Information

### History of Flight

<b>Landing-landing roll</b>	Off-field or emergency landing
<b>Landing-landing roll</b>	Nose over/nose down (Defining event)

On July 8, 2011, about 1315 Pacific daylight time, a Piper PA-22-108, N4901Z, nosed over during an off airport precautionary landing near Frazier Park, California. The pilot/owner was operating the airplane under the provisions of 14 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 91. The private pilot and one passenger were not injured; the airplane sustained substantial damage from impact forces. The personal cross-country flight departed Los Banos, California, about 1030, with a planned destination of Lompoc, California. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and no flight plan had been filed.

The pilot stated that he had been following Interstate 5, and then turned to the west to intercept Highway 166 to Santa Maria, California. He thought that the airplane was losing lift, and decided to land in a dry river bottom. During the landing roll, the nose wheel dug into soft dirt, and the airplane nosed over.

In a subsequent statement, the pilot stated that he was flying about 1,000 feet above the mountainous terrain. He thought that the engine was running fine, but not producing the power needed for the airplane to maintain altitude. He concentrated on the terrain rather than direction. The mixture was in the full rich position; he did not lean it, and did not recall using carburetor heat. He decided to make an off airport landing. The pilot circled a road, but was not comfortable with landing on it, and decided to land in a dry river bottom next to the road.

The Ventura County Sheriff responded to the accident site. The pilot told the responding deputy that he became lost and disoriented over Lockwood Valley using maps and a global positioning satellite system (GPS) to navigate. The pilot stated that the engine began to fail, and he attempted to make an emergency landing when the engine finally quit. The pilot attempted to land on Lockwood Valley road, but was unable to do so and he landed in the river bed.

Investigators examined the wreckage at Aircraft Recovery Service, Littlerock, California, on July 11, 2011. Detailed examination notes are part of the public docket. Postaccident examination of the engine and airframe revealed no evidence of preimpact mechanical malfunction for failure that would have precluded normal operation.

## Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Private	<b>Age:</b>	77
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine land; Single-engine sea; Multi-engine land	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Left
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	Unknown
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	No
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 3 With waivers/limitations	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	July 7, 2009
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	No	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	June 3, 2011
<b>Flight Time:</b>	1300 hours (Total, all aircraft), 150 hours (Total, this make and model), 1300 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 10 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 5 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 3 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Piper	<b>Registration:</b>	N4901Z
<b>Model/Series:</b>	PA-22-108	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Airplane
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	22-8486
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Tricycle	<b>Seats:</b>	2
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	May 9, 2011 Annual	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>		<b>Engines:</b>	1 Reciprocating
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	5325 Hrs as of last inspection	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	LYCOMING
<b>ELT:</b>	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	O-235-C1B
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	John Thomason	<b>Rated Power:</b>	115 Horsepower
<b>Operator:</b>	John Thomason	<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual (VMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	KSBA	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	
<b>Observation Time:</b>	12:53 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Clear	<b>Visibility</b>	10 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	None	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	6 knots /	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Wind Direction:</b>	210°	<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	29.86 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	22°C / 16°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	Los Banos, CA (LSN )	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	None
<b>Destination:</b>	Lompoc, CA (LPS )	<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>	10:30 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 None	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>	1 None	<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	2 None	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	34.737777,-119.251388(est)

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Plagens, Howard
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	Frank Motter; FAA FSDO; Van Nuys, CA
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	May 21, 2014
<b>Last Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Investigation Class:</b>	<a href="#">Class</a>
<b>Note:</b>	
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	<a href="https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=81050">https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=81050</a>

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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](#).