



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

<b>Location:</b>	SUMMERVILLE, South Carolina	<b>Accident Number:</b>	ATL92GA121
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	June 7, 1992, 05:30 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N86262
<b>Aircraft:</b>	ENSTROM 280FX	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Destroyed
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	2 Fatal
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Public aircraft		

## Analysis

THE PILOT AND OBSERVER WERE TO FLY THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE HELICOPTER FROM SUMMERVILLE TO CHARLESTON (15 MILES TO THE SOUTHEAST) FOLLOWING MAINTENANCE WORK. WHEN THE AIRCRAFT DID NOT ARRIVE AS SCHEDULED, A SEARCH WAS INITIATED. THE HELICOPTER WAS FOUND 4 DAYS LATER IN A FORESTED SWAMP, ABOUT .6 MILE NORTHWEST OF THE AIRPORT. THE WRECKAGE WAS FOUND UPRIGHT, DESTROYED BY FIRE. THERE WAS EVIDENCE OF IMPACT WITH A LARGE TREE AT ABOUT 70 FEET AGL. AN INSPECTION OF THE WRECKAGE REVEALED NO EVIDENCE OF A PRE-EXISTING MECHANICAL FAILURE OR MALFUNCTION. THE PILOT HAD ABOUT 145 HOURS OF HELICOPTER FLIGHT TIME, BUT WAS NOT INSTRUMENT RATED, NOR WAS THE AIRCRAFT CERTIFICATED FOR IFR. NUMEROUS LOCAL RESIDENTS REPORTED HEAVY FOG CONDITIONS AT THE TIME OF THE ACCIDENT; ONE PERSON WHO REPORTEDLY HEARD THE CRASH ESTIMATED THE VISIBILITY TO BE ABOUT 50-100 YARDS IN FOG. DARKNESS ALSO PREVAILED AT THE REPORTED TIME OF THE ACCIDENT. THE SAFETY BOARD BELIEVES THAT THE PILOT INADVERTENTLY ENTERED IMC CONDITIONS AND WAS ATTEMPTING TO NAVIGATE BACK TO THE DEPARTURE AIRPORT WHEN THE AIRCRAFT IMPACTED THE TREES.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE PILOT'S INADVERTENT FLIGHT INTO IMC, WHICH RESULTED IN AN IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TREES. FACTORS WERE THE OBSCURED SKY AND FOGGY WEATHER CONDITIONS, AND THE NIGHT LIGHTING CONDITIONS AT THE TIME OF THE ACCIDENT.

## Findings

Occurrence #1: UNDETERMINED

Phase of Operation: CRUISE - NORMAL

### Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - OBSCURATION
  2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - FOG
  3. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - NIGHT
  4. (F) WEATHER EVALUATION - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
  5. (C) VFR FLIGHT INTO IMC - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

### Findings

6. (F) OBJECT - TREE(S)
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Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

## Factual Information

### Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Commercial	<b>Age:</b>	49, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine land	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Left
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	Helicopter	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	Yes
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 2 Valid Medical-w/ waivers/lim	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	March 2, 1992
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	No	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	
<b>Flight Time:</b>	1515 hours (Total, all aircraft), 98 hours (Total, this make and model)		

### Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	ENSTROM	<b>Registration:</b>	N86262
<b>Model/Series:</b>	280FX 280FX	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Helicopter
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	2070
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Skid	<b>Seats:</b>	2
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	June 5, 1992 100 hour	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	2600 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>	5 Hrs	<b>Engines:</b>	1 Reciprocating
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	123 Hrs	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	LYCOMING
<b>ELT:</b>	Installed, not activated	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	HIO-360-F1AD
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	CHARLESTON CTY. SHERIFFS OFF.	<b>Rated Power:</b>	190 Horsepower
<b>Operator:</b>	CHARLESTON CTY. SHERIFFS OFF.	<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None
<b>Operator Does Business As:</b>		<b>Operator Designator Code:</b>	

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Instrument (IMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Night/dark
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	CHS ,46 ft msl	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	15 Nautical Miles
<b>Observation Time:</b>	06:00 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	130°
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>		<b>Visibility</b>	2 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	None	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	/	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Wind Direction:</b>	0°	<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	30 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	23°C / 23°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	N/A - None - Fog		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	SUMMERVILLE , SC (71S )	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	None
<b>Destination:</b>	CHARLESTON , SC (CHS )	<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>	00:00 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class G

## Airport Information

<b>Airport:</b>	DORCHESTER COUNTY 71S	<b>Runway Surface Type:</b>	
<b>Airport Elevation:</b>	54 ft msl	<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	
<b>Runway Used:</b>	0	<b>IFR Approach:</b>	None
<b>Runway Length/Width:</b>		<b>VFR Approach/Landing:</b>	None

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	2 Fatal	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Destroyed
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>		<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	On-ground
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	On-ground
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	2 Fatal	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Hicks, Ralph
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	WILLIAM D SEXTON; COLUMBIA , SC
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	May 26, 1993
<b>Last Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Investigation Class:</b>	<a href="#">Class</a>
<b>Note:</b>	
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	<a href="https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=8521">https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=8521</a>

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