



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	BAKER CITY, OR	Accident Number:	SEA96LA037
Date & Time:	01/02/1996, 1330 PST	Registration:	N2761D
Aircraft:	Cessna 170B	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot stated that he encountered deteriorating weather while approaching his destination and elected to land on a public highway, and that the accident occurred during landing. However, a county sheriff's report indicated that the pilot told law enforcement personnel that he had landed on the highway earlier due to deteriorating weather and was attempting to take off again from the highway. The pilot told law enforcement personnel that during the takeoff, a motor vehicle rounded a corner in the road and that he pulled up to avoid it, but that 'The plane wasn't ready to get airborne.' The sheriff's report stated that after pulling up, the airplane touched down several times before impacting a bank along the side of the road. Statements from the vehicle driver and a local resident who lives along the highway supported the sequence of events given in the sheriff's report.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the pilot's premature lift-off and inadequate airspeed following liftoff. His use of a public highway as a takeoff area, and a motor vehicle on the highway, were factors.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - INITIAL CLIMB

Findings

1. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - ROADWAY/HIGHWAY
2. (F) OBJECT - VEHICLE
3. (C) EVASIVE MANEUVER - PERFORMED - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (C) LIFT-OFF - PREMATURE - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. (C) AIRSPEED - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

6. TERRAIN CONDITION - DIRT BANK/RISING EMBANKMENT

Factual Information

On January 2, 1996, approximately 1330 Pacific standard time, a Cessna 170B, N2761D, received substantial damage when it impacted a roadside embankment after a loss of control on takeoff approximately 15 miles southeast of Baker City, Oregon. The commercial pilot, who was the sole occupant of the aircraft and was not injured, was attempting to take off from a public highway. The loss of control followed a near collision between the airplane and a motor vehicle on the highway. The driver of the motor vehicle was also uninjured. According to the pilot, the 14 CFR 91 flight was en route from Nampa, Idaho, to Baker City. Instrument meteorological conditions existed and no flight plan had been filed.

The pilot stated on his NTSB accident report that he encountered deteriorating weather conditions in the area, from which he was unable to escape, and decided to land on the highway (referred to as "Highway 30" in the Baker County sheriff's report of the accident.) He stated that the weather conditions prevented him from landing at the Baker City airport. He reported that during the attempted landing on the highway, the airplane's wingtip struck a bank on the side of the road and he lost control of the airplane. However, the sheriff's report indicated that the pilot told responding law enforcement personnel that he had landed on the highway earlier, due to the weather conditions, and was attempting to take off from the highway at the time of the accident. According to the sheriff's report, the pilot stated that during the attempted takeoff, a pickup truck rounded a corner in the road and "he then pulled up, but in his words, "The plane wasn't ready to get airborne." The sheriff's report indicated that the plane then touched down several times before impacting the bank on the east side of the highway.

The sheriff's report indicated that responding law enforcement personnel interviewed the driver of the pickup, who returned to the scene. The sheriff's report stated that she told them she encountered the airplane as she rounded a curve in the road. The pickup driver stated to the law enforcement personnel that she swerved to miss the airplane and that the airplane then "climbed in an upward motion." She also stated to them that "the plane came very, very close to her vehicle" and indicated to them that she had been badly frightened in the encounter. The pickup driver later verified this information in a telephone interview with the NTSB investigator-in-charge (IIC). The pickup driver stated to the NTSB IIC that she encountered the airplane head-on as she traveled east on the highway.

The driver of the pickup truck furnished the name and telephone number of a local resident whose house is on the public highway approximately 2/3 to 3/4 mile west of Pleasant Valley. This local resident stated in a telephone interview with the NTSB IIC on April 18, 1996, that she saw a "little orange airplane" parked, in apparently undamaged condition, between Pleasant Valley and her house at about 0900 on the day of the accident. She stated that the airplane was parked off the side of the road, and that she had seen the airplane circling the area before she saw it parked. She stated that she asked the pilot if he was all right, and that he replied he was fine. She also said the pilot asked her details of the road such as the length of the straight stretch and where the corners were, and said the pilot told her he needed to take off into the wind. She said that later, at about 1600, she saw the damaged airplane west of its parked location.

Records contained in a FAA air traffic services package assembled for the accident investigation indicated that the pilot of N2761D received two telephone weather briefings from

the automated flight service station (AFSS) at Boise, Idaho on the morning of the accident, at 1503 UTC and 1606 UTC. Transcripts of both briefings indicate that the pilot gave his destination as Seattle and that he was informed both times that visual flight rules (VFR) flight was not recommended. The weather in both briefings was given as generally marginal VFR to IFR conditions along the pilot's entire route, with IFR outlook. At 2150 UTC (1350 PST, approximately 20 minutes after the accident) Baker, 12 miles northwest of the accident site, reported scattered clouds at 400 feet, an estimated broken ceiling of 900 feet, an overcast at 1,300 feet, and 7 miles visibility.

On his NTSB accident report narrative, the pilot attributed his "landing" accident to improperly placing the mixture control to full rich in high density altitude conditions, stating that the aircraft's altimeter read 4,710 feet after the accident, and that the mixture setting had resulted in a loss of engine power which prevented him from being able to arrest a descent rate during his landing attempt. However, the elevation of the accident site as shown by terrain contour lines on a map in the DeLorme Oregon Atlas is approximately 3,600 feet. A post-accident photograph of the aircraft instrument panel provided by the on-scene FAA investigator showed the aircraft altimeter reading 4,100 feet. Baker, at an elevation of 3,369 feet, reported a temperature of 38 degrees F and altimeter setting of 30.09 inches Hg in its 2150 UTC surface observation. For conditions of 3,369-foot field elevation, 38 degrees F, and 30.09 inches Hg, the density altitude was calculated by the investigator to be 2,564 feet.

The pilot indicated on his NTSB accident report that his last biennial flight review was in June 1993, over 2 1/2 years prior to the accident.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	47, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land; Single-engine Sea	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	11/07/1994
Occupational Pilot:	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:		
Flight Time:	1575 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1200 hours (Total, this make and model), 1545 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 75 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 66 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 11 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Cessna	Registration:	N2761D
Model/Series:	170B 170B	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	25303
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	02/06/1995, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2200 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	C145-2
Registered Owner:	SONJA J. CHESTER	Rated Power:	145 hp
Operator:	WAYNE J. CALKIN	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	BKE, 3369 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	12 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	1350 PST	Direction from Accident Site:	300°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 400 ft agl	Visibility	7 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 900 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	9 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	100°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	3°C / 1°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	NAMPA, ID (S67)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	, OR (BKE)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	1300 MST	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): GREGG NESEMEIER **Report Date:** 07/25/1996

Additional Participating Persons: ROBERT L ROUNTREE; BOISE, ID

Publish Date:

Investigation Docket: NTSB accident and incident dockets serve as permanent archival information for the NTSB's investigations. Dockets released prior to June 1, 2009 are publicly available from the NTSB's Record Management Division at pubinq@ntsb.gov, or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at <http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/>.

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), established in 1967, is an independent federal agency mandated by Congress through the Independent Safety Board Act of 1974 to investigate transportation accidents, determine the probable causes of the accidents, issue safety recommendations, study transportation safety issues, and evaluate the safety effectiveness of government agencies involved in transportation. The NTSB makes public its actions and decisions through accident reports, safety studies, special investigation reports, safety recommendations, and statistical reviews.

The Independent Safety Board Act, as codified at 49 U.S.C. Section 1154(b), precludes the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an incident or accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report. A factual report that may be admissible under 49 U.S.C. § 1154(b) is available [here](#).