



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

Location:	BRANDYWINE, MD	Accident Number:	IAD97FA001
Date & Time:	10/02/1996, 1112 EDT	Registration:	N2881W
Aircraft:	Piper PA-32-300	Injuries:	3 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot was receiving vectors from air traffic control for a visual approach to Hyde Field Airport. The pilot was in instrument meteorological conditions and attempting to acquire visual meteorological conditions to conduct the landing. The last assigned altitude given to the pilot by ATC was 1600 feet, which was the minimum vectoring altitude for that area. The pilot radioed ATC and informed them that he was descending to 1000 feet. ATC did not respond to the pilot's radio call. The airplane descended to 1000 feet, circled 360 degrees and had almost completed a second circle when it was lost off radar. The last recorded altitude was 800 feet, the airplane subsequently descended into the terrain with no warning provided by ATC.

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilots failure to maintain his assigned altitude in IFR conditions. A related factor was the failure of the radar controller to prevent the descent of N2881W to an altitude below the minimum vectoring altitude. Additionally, the controller's failure to issue a safety alert after the MSAW issued 4 warnings in the radar room.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: CIRCLING (IFR)

Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - LOW CEILING
2. (C) ALTITUDE/CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) APPROACH/DEPARTURE CONTROL SERVICE - INATTENTIVE - ATC PERSONNEL(DEP/APCH)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	71
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Instructor Rating(s):	None
Flight Time:	1732 hours (Total, all aircraft), 450 hours (Total, this make and model), 1732 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 5 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 3 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N2881W
Model/Series:	PA-32-300 PA-32-300	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Operator:	LEILA SCHOTT	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None	Engine Model/Series:	IO-540-K1G5
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	DCA, 16 ft msl	Weather Information Source:	Weather Observation Facility
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 1000 ft agl	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	2 knots / , 30°
Temperature:	17° C	Visibility	2 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	SOMERVILLE, NJ (N52)	Destination:	CLINTON, MD (W32)

Airport Information

Airport:	WASHINGTON EXEC-HYDE ARPT (W32)	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Runway Used:	0	Runway Surface Condition:	Wet
Runway Length/Width:	3000 ft / 60 ft		

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	2 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Latitude, Longitude:			

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	BUTCH WILSON	Adopted Date:	03/31/1998
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/ .		

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