



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

Location:	HALAWA, HI	Accident Number:	LAX97FA032
Date & Time:	11/01/1996, 1907 HST	Registration:	N1701K
Aircraft:	Piper PA-34-200	Injuries:	5 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The noninstrument-rated commercial pilot departed in VFR conditions at twilight. En route, the pilot encountered marginal VFR conditions. Radar data showed that the aircraft made a gradual left turn toward rising terrain, as it entered an area of poor weather. Subsequently, it flew into rising wooded terrain at an elevation of about 1,600 feet, near the top of a mountainous ridge. Witnesses in a sparsely inhabited rural area located about 3 miles from the accident site reported that the light condition was 'pitch black,' when the aircraft flew low over their location, and that instrument meteorological conditions (IMC) prevailed. 'Torrential' rains, which had just ended at their location, continued in the area where the aircraft impacted terrain. No preaccident mechanical malfunction of the aircraft was found. Another pilot, who had flown the aircraft recently, stated that the heading indicator would precess 30 degrees in 10 minutes. The pilot's flight instructor said that he (the pilot) was working toward an instrument rating, but was not yet qualified to fly by reference to instruments.

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the pilot's inadvertent VFR flight into instrument meteorological conditions (IMC), and his failure to maintain sufficient clearance and/or altitude from mountainous terrain. Factors related to the accident were: darkness, adverse weather conditions, and mountainous terrain.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER
Phase of Operation: CRUISE

Findings

1. LIGHT CONDITION - DARK NIGHT
2. WEATHER CONDITION - OBSCURATION
3. WEATHER CONDITION - RAIN
4. (C) VFR FLIGHT INTO IMC - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. (F) LACK OF TOTAL INSTRUMENT TIME - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: CRUISE

Findings

6. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - MOUNTAINOUS/HILLY
7. (C) ALTITUDE/CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	38
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Instrument Rating(s):	None
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Instructor Rating(s):	None
Flight Time:	670 hours (Total, all aircraft), 100 hours (Total, this make and model), 550 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 15 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N1701K
Model/Series:	PA-34-200 PA-34-200	Engines:	2 Reciprocating
Operator:	ROBERT P. MCCARTHY	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None	Engine Model/Series:	L/IO-360-C1E6
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions	Condition of Light:	Night/Dark
Observation Facility, Elevation:	, 0 ft msl	Weather Information Source:	Witness
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 0 ft agl	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	/ ,
Temperature:		Visibility	0.12 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	KAUNAKAKAI, HI (MKK)	Destination:	KAHULUI, HI (OGG)

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	4 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Latitude, Longitude:			

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	RICHARD B PARKER	Adopted Date:	01/30/1998
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/ .		

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.