



# National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

<b>Location:</b>	LEVELLAND, TX	<b>Accident Number:</b>	FTW98LA202
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	05/01/1998, 1430 CDT	<b>Registration:</b>	N459U
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Cessna 150M	<b>Injuries:</b>	1 Minor, 1 None
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General Aviation - Instructional		

## Analysis

The flight instructor (CFI) and student pilot reported that during an instructional flight, the airplane encountered a severe downdraft that it was unable to out climb, while in the traffic pattern. This occurred after the flight departed from runway 17 to practice takeoffs and landings in the traffic pattern. The CFI reported that after turning crosswind, while the engine was still operating at full takeoff power, the airplane encountered a severe downdraft, which resulted in a rate of descent that exceeded 1,000 feet per minute. The CFI turned the airplane away from high tension power lines as he maneuvered the airplane towards a plowed field to the east-southeast of the airport. The CFI reduced power before the airplane impacted the ground in a landing attitude with the flaps retracted. The operator stated that virga and dust devils were observed in all quadrants near the time of the accident. An FAA inspector also observed signs of downdrafts and virga while en route to the accident site. On a previous flight, the operator experienced 'strong up and downdrafts due to the highly unstable weather pattern.' The density altitude was calculated by the investigator-in-charge to be 5,600 feet.

## Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the pilot's inaccurate weather evaluation, subsequent encounter with a severe downdraft, and failure (or inability) to compensate for the wind (downdraft) condition. The high density altitude was a related factor.

## Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER  
Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - INITIAL CLIMB

### Findings

1. (C) WEATHER EVALUATION - INACCURATE - PILOT IN COMMAND(CFI)
  2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - HIGH DENSITY ALTITUDE
  3. (C) WEATHER CONDITION - DOWNDRAFT
  4. (C) COMPENSATION FOR WIND CONDITIONS - INADEQUATE
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Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER  
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

## Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Flight Instructor; Commercial	<b>Age:</b>	20
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine Land	<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	Airplane
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	Airplane Single-engine; Instrument Airplane
<b>Flight Time:</b>	400 hours (Total, all aircraft), 152 hours (Total, this make and model), 262 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 130 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 77 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Cessna	<b>Registration:</b>	N459U
<b>Model/Series:</b>	150M 150M	<b>Engines:</b>	1 Reciprocating
<b>Operator:</b>	STEVEN C. BERNSTEIN	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Continental
<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	O-200-A
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General Aviation - Instructional		

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual Conditions	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	LBB, 0 ft msl	<b>Weather Information Source:</b>	Weather Observation Facility
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	None / 0 ft agl	<b>Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:</b>	9 knots / 14 knots, 130°
<b>Temperature:</b>	27° C	<b>Visibility</b>	10 Miles
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>			
<b>Departure Point:</b>	(Q24)	<b>Destination:</b>	

## Airport Information

<b>Airport:</b>	LEVELLAND MUNICIPAL (Q24)	<b>Runway Surface Type:</b>	Asphalt
<b>Runway Used:</b>	17	<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	Dry
<b>Runway Length/Width:</b>	6100 ft / 75 ft		

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 Minor, 1 None	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Destroyed
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>			

## Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): HECTOR R CASANOVA      Adopted Date: 10/30/1998

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](mailto: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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