



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

Location:	CALIFORNIA, MD	Accident Number:	BFO93FA129
Date & Time:	07/01/1993, 0330 EDT	Registration:	N5291L
Aircraft:	PIPER PA-28-180	Injuries:	1 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

THE PILOT TOOK OFF IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS INTO MARGINAL VFR AND/OR IMC CONDITIONS. NO WEATHER BRIEFING, FLIGHT PLAN, OR RADIO COMMUNICATIONS WERE RECORDED BY ANY FAA FACILITY. THE AIRPLANE IMPACTED TREES LESS THAN 1 MI FROM THE AIRPORT, AND WAS FOUND 17 DAYS LATER. EXAMINATION OF THE AIRPLANE DID NOT REVEAL ANY PRE-IMPACT MECHANICAL MALFUNCTIONS. THE AIRPLANE WAS FLOWN BY OTHER PILOTS FOR ABOUT 6 HRS TOTAL TIME 1 DAY PRIOR TO THE ACCIDENT WITH NO SIGNIFICANT DISCREPANCIES NOTED. WITNESSES REPORTED THAT THE PILOT HAD AT LEAST 'ONE OR TWO' MIXED ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES BEFORE 2100. THE MEDICAL EXAMINER PERFORMED A TOXICOLOGICAL ANALYSIS ON A SPECIMEN OF MUSCLE TISSUE TO SCREEN FOR ALCOHOL - THE FINDING WAS NEGATIVE. WITNESS STATEMENTS INDICATE THAT THE PILOT HAD BEEN AWAKE FOR OVER 18 HRS.

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE PILOT INITIATING VFR FLIGHT IN INSTRUMENT METEOROLOGICAL CONDITIONS. FACTORS WHICH CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACCIDENT WERE: THE PILOT'S FAILURE TO OBTAIN A WEATHER BRIEFING, HIS LACK OF SLEEP, AND THE EXISTING WEATHER CONDITIONS.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: CLIMB

Findings

1. (F) PREFLIGHT PLANNING/PREPARATION - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - LOW CEILING
3. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - FOG
4. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - OBSCURATION
5. (C) VFR FLIGHT INTO IMC - INITIATED - PILOT IN COMMAND
6. (F) FATIGUE(LACK OF SLEEP) - PILOT IN COMMAND
7. OBJECT - TREE(S)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	53
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Instructor Rating(s):	None
Flight Time:	7128 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	PIPER	Registration:	N5291L
Model/Series:	PA-28-180 PA-28-180	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Operator:	AIRPARK SALES AND SERVICE, INC	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None	Engine Model/Series:	O-360-A4A
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions	Condition of Light:	Dawn
Observation Facility, Elevation:	NHK, 40 ft msl	Weather Information Source:	Weather Observation Facility
Lowest Ceiling:	None / 0 ft agl	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	7 knots / , 120°
Temperature:	23° C	Visibility	2 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	Destination: HAMPTON ROADS, VA (PVG)		

Airport Information

Airport:	ST. MARY'S COUNTY (2W6)	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Runway Used:	0	Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Length/Width:			

Wreckage and Impact Information

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

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Jeffrey B Guzzetti

Adopted Date: 09/27/1994

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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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.