



# National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

<b>Location:</b>	NORTH LAS VEGAS, NV	<b>Accident Number:</b>	LAX00FA014
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	10/14/1999, 1946 PDT	<b>Registration:</b>	N1024B
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Piper PA-31-350	<b>Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 135: Air Taxi & Commuter - Non-scheduled		

## Analysis

The airplane collided with mountainous terrain during climb to cruise on a night departure. The pilot of the on-demand cargo flight was brought in off reserve to replace the scheduled pilot who was ill. The flight was behind schedule because the cargo was late. When the instrument flight release created further delay, the pilot opted to depart into the clear, dark night under visual flight rules (VFR) with the intention of picking up his instrument clearance when airborne. When clearing the flight for takeoff, the tower controller issued a suggested heading of 340 degrees, which headed the aircraft toward mountainous terrain 11 miles north of the airport. The purpose of the suggested heading was never stated to the pilot as required by FAA Order 7110.65L. After a frequency change to radar departure control, the controller asked the pilot 'are you direct [the initial (route) fix] at this time?' and the pilot replied, 'we can go ahead and we'll go direct [the initial fix].' A turn toward the initial fix would have headed the aircraft away from high terrain. The controller then diverted his attention to servicing another VFR aircraft and the accident aircraft continued to fly heading 340 degrees until impacting the mountain. ATC personnel said the 340-degree heading was routinely issued to departing aircraft to avoid them entering Class B airspace 3 miles from the airport. The approach control supervisor said this flight departs daily, often VFR, and routinely turns toward the initial fix, avoiding mountainous terrain. When the pilot said that he would go to the initial fix, the controller expected him to turn away from the terrain. Minimum Safe Altitude Warning (MSAW) was not enabled for the flight because the original, instrument flight plan did not route the aircraft through this approach control's airspace and the controller had not had time to manually enter the flight data. High terrain was not displayed on the controller's radar display and no safety alert was issued.

## Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The failure of the pilot-in-command to maintain separation from terrain while operating under visual flight rules. Contributing factors were the improper issuance of a suggested heading by air traffic control personnel, inadequate flight progress monitoring by radar departure control personnel, and failure of the radar controller to identify a hazardous condition and issue a safety alert.

## Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER  
Phase of Operation: CLIMB - TO CRUISE

### Findings

1. TERRAIN CONDITION - MOUNTAINOUS/HILLY
2. LIGHT CONDITION - DARK NIGHT

3. (C) ALTITUDE/CLEARANCE - NOT OBTAINED/MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (F) ATC CLEARANCE - IMPROPER - ATC PERSONNEL(LCL/GND/CLNC)
5. (F) MONITORING - INADEQUATE - ATC PERSONNEL(DEP/APCH)
6. (F) SAFETY ADVISORY - NOT ISSUED - ATC PERSONNEL(DEP/APCH)

## Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Airline Transport; Flight Instructor	<b>Age:</b>	30
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	Airplane
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	Airplane Multi-engine; Airplane Single-engine; Instrument Airplane
<b>Flight Time:</b>	2103 hours (Total, all aircraft), 250 hours (Total, this make and model), 1956 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 176 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 40 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Piper	<b>Registration:</b>	N1024B
<b>Model/Series:</b>	PA-31-350 PA-31-350	<b>Engines:</b>	2 Reciprocating
<b>Operator:</b>	AMERIFLIGHT, INC.	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Lycoming
<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	On-demand Air Taxi (135)	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	TIO-540-J2BD
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 135: Air Taxi & Commuter - Non-scheduled		

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual Conditions	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Night/Dark
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	VGT, 2203 ft msl	<b>Weather Information Source:</b>	Weather Observation Facility
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	None / 0 ft agl	<b>Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:</b>	Calm / , Variable
<b>Temperature:</b>	28°C	<b>Visibility</b>	10 Miles
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>			
<b>Departure Point:</b>	, NV (VGT)	<b>Destination:</b>	SACRAMENTO, CA (SAC)

## Wreckage and Impact Information

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

## Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): RICHARD B PARKER

Adopted Date: 04/06/2001

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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