



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	Rialto, CA	Accident Number:	LAX01FA134
Date & Time:	04/01/2001, 0023 PST	Registration:	N739WE
Aircraft:	Cessna 172N	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

A flight school Cessna 172N was destroyed during a departure collision with communication wires and terrain at Rialto, California, about 0023 hours. The accident flight was returning to Hawthorne, California. The pilot had obtained a standard weather briefing at 2319, for the return flight. The pilot was advised of airmets for IFR ceiling and visibilities for his route of flight. The airplane had been the subject of an Federal Aviation Administration ALNOT, issued at 2210, for failure to cancel an instrument flight plan with Southern California Tracon from Hawthorne to Rialto, an uncontrolled airport. The pilot had obtained an FAA preflight weather briefing at 1551, for the flight to Rialto. According to the instrument flight plan information, the estimated time of arrival at Rialto had been 1845. Subsequently, the airplane was located at the Rialto airport parking ramp by county sheriff personnel. The ALNOT was canceled at 2240. The operator stated that the pilot and passenger had flown to Rialto to visit with friends and were to return to Hawthorne. The pilot was a flight instructor for the operator and was rated in airplane single engine land and instrument. They reported that he had accrued 650 total flight hours. Radar data was obtained from Southern California Tracon and a plot was generated by a private vendor for Cessna Aircraft Company. It shows the airplane circling back over the airport and heading northwest. The highest altitude before coverage is lost is 1,700 feet mean sea level.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's intentional visual flight into instrument meteorological conditions. Contributing to the accident was the pilot's improper weather evaluation and lack of total experience.

Findings

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

Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - FOG
 2. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - DARK NIGHT
 3. (C) FLIGHT INTO KNOWN ADVERSE WEATHER - INTENTIONAL - PILOT IN COMMAND
 4. (C) WEATHER EVALUATION - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

Findings

5. OBJECT - UTILITY POLE

Factual Information

HISTORY OF FLIGHT

On April 1, 2001, about 0023 hours Pacific standard time, a Cessna 172N, N739WE, operated by Security Aviation of Hawthorne, California, was destroyed during the collision sequence with communication wires and terrain at Rialto, California. The commercial flight instructor rated pilot and passenger both received fatal injuries. Instrument meteorological conditions prevailed for the personal flight operating under 14 CFR Part 91, and no flight plan was filed. The accident flight was destined for Hawthorne.

On March 31, 2001, the airplane had been the subject of a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) alert notification (ALNOT), issued at 2210, for failure to cancel an instrument flight plan for a flight between Hawthorne and Rialto, California. The Rialto airport is uncontrolled. The pilot had obtained an FAA preflight weather briefing at 1551, for the flight to Rialto. According to the instrument flight plan information, the estimated time of arrival at Rialto was 1845. Subsequently, the airplane was located at the Rialto airport parking ramp by San Bernardino County Aero Bureau personnel located on the airport. The ALNOT was canceled at 2240.

The pilot obtained a standard weather briefing for the return flight to Hawthorne at 2319. He was advised of airmets for IFR ceilings and visibilities for his route of flight.

The operator stated that the pilot and passenger had flown to Rialto to visit with friends and were to return to Hawthorne. The pilot was a flight instructor for the operator and possessed airplane single engine land and instrument ratings.

PILOT INFORMATION

On November 19, 1999, the pilot was issued a private pilot certificate at 113 total flight hours. On January 3, 2000, the pilot was issued an instrument airplane rating at 155 total hours, including 35 dual instrument hours.

AIRPLANE INFORMATION

According to airplane logbook records, the last documented inspection occurred on March 23, 2001, as an annual inspection performed at 9,295 total flight hours. The last recorded altimeter and static system tests required by FAR 91.411 and Part 43 appendix "E" was accomplished on June 4, 1999.

METEOROLOGICAL INFORMATION

At 2353, the Ontario International Airport, located 11 miles southwest of the accident site, was reporting: wind 240 degrees at 5 knots; visibility 2.5 statute miles; mist/light fog; overcast at 700 feet; temperature 55 degrees Fahrenheit; dew point 55 degrees Fahrenheit; and the altimeter was 29.92 inHg.

At 2353, the Riverside Municipal Airport, 11 miles south, was reporting: wind 290 degrees at 4 knots; visibility 1.5 statute miles; mist/light fog; overcast at 300 feet; temperature 55 degrees Fahrenheit; dew point 55 degrees Fahrenheit; and the altimeter was 29.92 inHg.

WRECKAGE AND IMPACT INFORMATION

The wreckage was examined by the Safety Board investigator about 3 hours after the accident occurred. The weather was near total obscuration in fog and mist.

The wreckage was located about .80 mile northwest of the airport. At the accident site, communications wires were severed from their poles that were 23 to 26 feet in height. The communication service went off line at 0023. The wires were strewn across Highland Avenue from the north to south. Wreckage debris consisting of window Plexiglas, left flap section, window frame, and interior molding was scattered from the broken wires south. The wreckage path was measured about 150 degrees over about 200 feet, missing power lines on the south side of Highland Avenue.

The left wing and lift strut were located within 26 feet south of Highland Avenue, with fire damage to the aft wing root section and flap. The main wing spar carry through and cabin top skin were located about 58 feet south.

The fuselage, right wing, and empennage were located 192 feet south of Highland Avenue pointing about 100 degrees. The entire cabin section from the firewall to aft of the baggage area and right wing root were destroyed by post accident fire damage.

A propeller blade exhibited leading edge gouging, chordwise striations, and trailing edge "S" bending.

MEDICAL AND PATHOLOGICAL INFORMATION

On April 3, 2001, the San Bernardino County Medical Examiner performed an autopsy on the pilot. During the course of the procedure samples were obtained for toxicological analysis by the Federal Aviation Administration Civil Aeromedical Institute in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The results of the analysis were negative for carbon monoxide, ethanol, and drugs.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On July 1, 2002, the wreckage was released to the insurance company representative for the owner.

Radar data was obtained from Southern California Tracon and a plot was generated by a private vendor for Cessna Aircraft Company. A copy of the plot is attached to this report. It shows the airplane circling back over the airport and heading northwest. The highest altitude before coverage is lost is 1,700 feet mean sea level.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Flight Instructor; Commercial	Age:	22, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane Single-engine	Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 1 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	12/06/2000
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	12/06/2000
Flight Time:	650 hours (Total, all aircraft), 500 hours (Total, this make and model)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Cessna	Registration:	N739WE
Model/Series:	172N	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	17270858
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	03/23/2001, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2300 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	30 Hours	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	9300 Hours	Engine Manufacturer:	Avco Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-320-H2AD
Registered Owner:	M & S Air Supply	Rated Power:	160 hp
Operator:	Security Aviation	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions	Condition of Light:	Night/Dark
Observation Facility, Elevation:	ONT, 943 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	11 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	2353 PST	Direction from Accident Site:	225°
Lowest Cloud Condition:		Visibility	2.5 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 700 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	5 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	240°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.92 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	13° C / 13° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	Rialto, CA (L67)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Hawthorne, CA (HHR)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	1220 PST	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	Rialto Municipal (L67)	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	1455 ft	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	24	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	4500 ft / 100 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

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

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	GEORGE E PETERSON	Report Date:	04/29/2003
Additional Participating Persons:	Anthony Constanza; FAA Flight Standards District Office; Riverside, CA Mark Platt; Textron Lycoming; Williamsport, PA Thomas Teplik; Cessna Aircraft Company; Wichita, KS		
Publish Date:			
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. A factual report that may be admissible under 49 U.S.C. § 1154(b) is available [here](#).