



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

Location:	Gypsum, CO	Accident Number:	FTW02FA222
Date & Time:	08/01/2002, 0855 MDT	Registration:	N6444J
Aircraft:	Piper PA-28-180	Injuries:	2 Fatal, 2 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

Approximately 19 nm northwest of the departure airport (elevation 6,535 feet), the airplane impacted the rising mountainous terrain at an elevation of 10,050 feet. Prior to departure, the pilot calculated the airplane's gross weight to be approximately 2,270 pounds (maximum gross weight 2,400). After a takeoff roll of approximately 5,000 feet, the airplane departed the runway, and the pilot executed a right turn toward the rising terrain. Approximately 5 minutes into the flight, the right front seat passenger commented to the pilot that "we're going kinda low." The pilot stated that after climbing about 10 to 15 minutes up a valley, he noticed that the vertical climb rate had decreased to about 100-200 feet per minute, which was half the climb rate that he expected at full throttle power. During the impact with the terrain, the fuel tanks ruptured and the airplane was destroyed by a post-impact fire. The engine was test run according to the manufacturer specifications. No discrepancies or anomalies were noted during the engine test run that would indicate the engine was not capable of operating and producing power prior to the accident. No anomalies or discrepancies were noted with the airframe. The density altitude at the accident site was calculated to be approximately 12,000 feet.

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's failure to perform remedial action and maintain clearance with the rising mountainous terrain. Contributing factors were the pilot's poor planning/decision, the rising terrain, and the high density altitude.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

Findings

1. (F) PLANNING/DECISION - POOR - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - RISING
3. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - HIGH DENSITY ALTITUDE
4. (C) ALTITUDE/CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. (C) REMEDIAL ACTION - NOT PERFORMED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	42
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land	Instrument Rating(s):	None
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Instructor Rating(s):	None
Flight Time:	260 hours (Total, all aircraft), 50 hours (Total, this make and model), 185 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 20 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 5 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N6444J
Model/Series:	PA-28-180	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Operator:	Glenwood Flyers L.L.C.	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:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:		Weather Information Source:	Pilot
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	/ ,
Temperature:		Visibility	10 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	Eagle, CO (EGE)	Destination:	Idaho Falls, ID (IDA)

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	2 Fatal, 1 Serious	Aircraft Fire:	On-Ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Latitude, Longitude:	39.808611, -107.276389		

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Aaron M Sauer	Adopted Date:	09/30/2003
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 pubin@ntsb.gov , or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/ .		

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