



# National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

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<b>Location:</b>	Garden City, KS	<b>Accident Number:</b>	CHI03FA003
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	10/02/2002, 0658 CDT	<b>Registration:</b>	N3279Z
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Piper PA-18A	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Destroyed
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

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## Analysis

The airplane, piloted by a non-instrument rated private pilot, was found destroyed about 2.5 nautical miles southwest of the departure airport. Night instrument meteorological conditions prevailed at the time of the accident. Flight control continuity was confirmed and torsional signatures on the propeller blades were noted.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The inadequate preflight planning/preparation and visual flight rules flight into instrument meteorological conditions by the pilot. The clouds, mist, and night conditions were contributing factors.

## Findings

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Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT  
Phase of Operation: CLIMB - TO CRUISE

### Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - CLOUDS
2. (C) PREFLIGHT PLANNING/PREPARATION - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - FOG
4. (C) VFR FLIGHT INTO IMC - PERFORMED - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - NIGHT

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Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER  
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

### Findings

6. TERRAIN CONDITION - GROUND

## Factual Information

### HISTORY OF FLIGHT

On October 2, 2002, approximately 0658 central daylight time, a Piper PA-18A, N3279Z, owned and piloted by a noninstrument rated private pilot, was destroyed on impact with terrain approximately 2.5 nautical miles southwest of Garden City Regional Airport (GCK), Garden City, Kansas. The airplane was reported missing on the same day and was found on the following day. Night instrument meteorological conditions prevailed at the time of the accident. The 14 CFR Part 91 personal flight was not operating on a flight plan. The pilot was fatally injured. The flight originated from GCK approximately 0641 en route to a private airstrip near Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

### PERSONNEL INFORMATION

The pilot, age 57, held a private pilot certificate with an airplane single engine land rating. The last entry in the pilot's logbook was dated July 13, 2002 in the accident airplane from "Gains" to "MCG, AL Al/OVEL" for a total duration 57.00 hours at a total time 2,998 hours. His last biennial flight review was dated April 22, 2002.

He was issued a third class medical certificate on March 28, 2001, with the following limitation: "must have available glasses for near vision."

### AIRPLANE INFORMATION

The 1959 Piper PA-18A, serial number 18-7199, was registered to the pilot's corporation. The airplane was last inspected during an annual inspection dated March 19, 2002, at an aircraft total time and tachometer time of 4,639.05 hours. A 100-hour inspection was also performed on the same date with a time since overhaul of 694.87 hours.

### WRECKAGE AND IMPACT INFORMATION

The airplane was resting upright on a northerly heading with its nose embedded in the side of a dry river bed. The propeller was separated from the engine and buried in the ground beneath the wreckage. The propeller exhibited S-shaped twisting and bending. Examination of the flight control system confirmed flight control continuity.

### WEATHER INFORMATION

The GCK automated surface observing system recorded, at 0654: wind from 020 degrees at 18 knots gusting to 23 knots; 1 statute mile visibility mist; overcast ceiling 200 feet above ground level; temperature 11 degrees Celsius (C) and dew point 11 degrees C; altimeter setting 29.97 inches of mercury.

According to the U.S. Naval Observatory, civil twilight began at 0714 on the day of the accident.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Federal Aviation Administration, The New Piper Aircraft, Inc., and Textron Lycoming were parties to the investigation.

The wreckage was released to the registered owner's insurance representative.

## Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Private	<b>Age:</b>	57, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine Land	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Left
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	Yes
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 3 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim.	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	03/28/2001
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>		<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	04/22/2002
<b>Flight Time:</b>			

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Piper	<b>Registration:</b>	N3279Z
<b>Model/Series:</b>	PA-18A	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Airplane
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	No
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal; Utility	<b>Serial Number:</b>	18-7199
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Tailwheel	<b>Seats:</b>	2
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	03/19/2003, Annual	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	1750 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>	225.58 Hours	<b>Engines:</b>	1 Reciprocating
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	4864.63 Hours at time of accident	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Lycoming
<b>ELT:</b>		<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	O-320-B2B
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	Wiltz Brothers Inc.	<b>Rated Power:</b>	150 hp
<b>Operator:</b>	Daniel A. Wiltz	<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions	Condition of Light:	Night
Observation Facility, Elevation:	GCK, 1042 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	2 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	0654 CDT	Direction from Accident Site:	62°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	1 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 200 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	18 knots / 23 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	20°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.97 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	11° C / 11° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	GARDEN CITY, KS (GCK)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Baton Rouge, LA (PVT)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	0641 CDT	Type of Airspace:	Class G

## Airport Information

Airport:	GARDEN CITY REGIONAL (GCK)	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt; Concrete
Airport Elevation:	2890 ft	Runway Surface Condition:	Unknown
Runway Used:	35	IFR Approach:	Unknown
Runway Length/Width:	7300 ft / 100 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Unknown

## 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
Total Injuries:	1 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	37.900833, -100.766667

## Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Mitchell F Gallo	Report Date:	12/30/2003
Additional Participating Persons:	Bob Downing; Federal Aviation Administration; Wichita, KS David C Moore; Textron Lycoming; Ardsley, PA George Hollingsworth; The New Piper Aircraft, Inc.; Reston, VA		
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 <a href="mailto:pubinq@ntsb.gov">pubinq@ntsb.gov</a> , or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at <a href="http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/">http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/</a> .		

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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](#).