



# National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

<b>Location:</b>	Leominster, MA	<b>Accident Number:</b>	NYC04FA136
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	06/01/2004, 2131 EDT	<b>Registration:</b>	N21072
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Piper PA-32-300	<b>Injuries:</b>	2 Fatal
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

## Analysis

The airplane was destroyed after impacting terrain during an approach in instrument meteorological conditions. At the destination airport, weather was reported as 3 statute miles of visibility and mist, and an overcast cloud layer at 700 feet. The overcast ceiling was variable from 400 to 1,100 feet agl. The flight progressed without incident, and once in the vicinity of the destination airport, the pilot requested and was subsequently cleared for the GPS approach. No further transmissions were received from the pilot. The airplane struck trees, and came to rest in a wooded area, about 1-3/4 miles from the runway 32 threshold, and about 1/2-mile right of the extended centerline. A postcrash fire consumed the main wreckage. The elevation of the accident site was 563 feet msl. Review of the approach plate for the GPS approach revealed that the inbound course from the final approach fix, located about 5 miles prior to the airport, was 324 degrees. The minimums for the straight in approach to runway 32 were 1 statute mile of visibility, and a minimum decision altitude of 960 feet msl (624 feet agl). No procedure turn was required for the approach. Review of radar data revealed that after the airplane crossed the final approach fix, it turned right, away from the final approach course, and began tracking northbound for several seconds. The airplane then made a left turn and proceeded inbound towards the airport and tracked an approximate 300-degree course until the last radar return was received, where the airplane was about 1 mile southeast of the airport at 1,000 feet msl. The pilot had accumulated about 409 hours of total flight experience. Within the previous 6 months, he had accumulated 7 hours, of which 1.7 hours were conducted in simulated instrument conditions, and .7 hours were in actual instrument conditions. The pilot's most recent flight conducted in nighttime conditions was about 20 months prior to the accident.

## Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's failure to follow instrument flight procedures resulting in a collision with trees. A factor related to the accident was the low cloud ceiling, and dark night.

## Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER  
Phase of Operation: APPROACH - FAF/OUTER MARKER TO THRESHOLD (IFR)

### Findings

1. (C) IFR PROCEDURE - NOT FOLLOWED - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. LACK OF RECENT EXPERIENCE - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - LOW CEILING
4. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - DARK NIGHT

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT

Phase of Operation: APPROACH - FAF/OUTER MARKER TO THRESHOLD (IFR)

#### Findings

5. OBJECT - TREE(S)

6. ALTITUDE/CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

### Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Private	<b>Age:</b>	47
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine Land	<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	Airplane
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None
<b>Flight Time:</b>	400 hours (Total, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

### Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Piper	<b>Registration:</b>	N21072
<b>Model/Series:</b>	PA-32-300	<b>Engines:</b>	1 Reciprocating
<b>Operator:</b>	James P. Normandin	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Lycoming
<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	IO-540
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

### Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Instrument Conditions	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Night/Dark
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	FIT, 348 ft msl	<b>Weather Information Source:</b>	Weather Observation Facility
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	Overcast / 700 ft agl	<b>Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:</b>	4 knots / , 80°
<b>Temperature:</b>	9°C	<b>Visibility</b>	3 Miles
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	Manchester, NH (MHT)	<b>Destination:</b>	Fitchburg, MA (FIT)

### Airport Information

<b>Airport:</b>	Fitchburg Municipal Airport (FIT)	<b>Runway Surface Type:</b>	Unknown
<b>Runway Used:</b>	32	<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	Unknown
<b>Runway Length/Width:</b>			

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Destroyed
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal	<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	On-Ground
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	42.546111, -71.721667		

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Stephen M Demko	<b>Adopted Date:</b>	04/25/2006
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	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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