



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

Location:	Armstrong, TX	Accident Number:	DFW07FA049
Date & Time:	01/02/2007, 2035 CST	Registration:	N3940R
Aircraft:	Cessna 172H	Injuries:	3 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

"THIS CASE WAS MODIFIED ON 1/31/2008."

The non-instrument rated private pilot inadvertently entered clouds while attempting a night cross-country in marginal night visual meteorological conditions. While maneuvering to maintain visual flight rules, the pilot entered the clouds and consequently lost control of the airplane. The airplane impacted the ground in a right turn in a pronounced nose-low attitude. The area of the accident is sparsely populated and there were no reported eyewitnesses to the accident. A pilot flying in the vicinity of the accident pilot reported several cloud layers between 1,500 and 6,000 feet mean sea level. The airplane was configured with the flaps retracted. Examination of the wreckage did not reveal any anomalies or pre-impact defects. The pilot had no actual instrument time and was not prepared to enter instrument meteorological conditions. Toxicology testing detected ethanol and citalopram in tissue samples. The ethanol detected is most likely a result of post-mortem ethanol production. It could not be determined if the use of citalopram (a prescription antidepressant also used for certain anxiety disorders and post-traumatic stress disorder) or the undetermined condition for which it was prescribed were contributory to the accident, although the use of citalopram by pilots is considered disqualifying by the FAA.

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's continued flight into adverse weather conditions resulting in a loss of control. Contributing factors were the dark night conditions, the clouds, low ceilings, and the pilot's limited night and instrument experience.

Findings

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

Findings

1. WEATHER CONDITION - CLOUDS
2. VFR FLIGHT INTO IMC - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. LIGHT CONDITION - NIGHT
4. (C) FLIGHT INTO ADVERSE WEATHER - CONTINUED - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. (F) QUALIFICATION - PILOT IN COMMAND
6. USE OF INAPPROPRIATE MEDICATION/DRUG - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

7. (C) AIRCRAFT CONTROL - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT

Findings

8. TERRAIN CONDITION - GROUND

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	26
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land	Instrument Rating(s):	None
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Instructor Rating(s):	None
Flight Time:	85 hours (Total, all aircraft), 85 hours (Total, this make and model), 3 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 3 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 3 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Cessna	Registration:	N3940R
Model/Series:	172H	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Operator:	Joe Smith Farms Inc.	Engine Manufacturer:	Teledyne Continental
Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None	Engine Model/Series:	O-300-D12
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions	Condition of Light:	Night/Dark
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KBKS, 112 ft msl	Weather Information Source:	Weather Observation Facility
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 6000 ft agl	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	8 knots / , 50°
Temperature:	12° C	Visibility	10 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Weslaco, TX (T65)	Destination:	Jacksonville, TX (JSO)

Airport Information

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	
Runway Used:	NA	Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Length/Width:			

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	2 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Latitude, Longitude:	26.874167, -97.729167		

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	William H Gamble	Adopted Date:	01/31/2008
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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