



# National Transportation Safety Board

## Aviation Accident Data Summary

<b>Location:</b>	Rio Grande, PR	<b>Accident Number:</b>	ERA09FA078
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	12/03/2008, 1205 AST	<b>Registration:</b>	N318WA
<b>Aircraft:</b>	ROCKWELL INTERNATIONAL 690B	<b>Injuries:</b>	3 Fatal
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 135: Air Taxi & Commuter - Non-scheduled		

### Analysis

The charter flight departed for the destination, where the passengers would connect with another airline flight. The instrument-rated pilot may have felt pressured as the flight departed late. The accident airplane approached the destination airport from the east, descending at 250 knots ground speed from 8,800 feet above mean sea level (msl), on a 270 degree assigned heading, and was instructed to enter the right downwind for runway 10. The airplane's altitude readout was then observed by the approach controller to change to "XXX." The pilot was queried regarding his altitude and he advised that he was descending to 3,200 feet msl. The pilot was asked to confirm that he was in visual flight rules (VFR) conditions and was advised that the minimum vectoring altitude (MVA) for the area was 5,500 feet msl. The pilot responded that "We just ahh," at which time the controller advised that she missed his transmission and asked him to repeat it. The pilot stated "Ahh roger, could we stay right just a little, we are in and out of some clouds right now." The controller advised the pilot to "Maintain VFR" and again of the MVA. The controller then made multiple attempts to contact the pilot without result. The wreckage was discovered on the side of a mountain, where the airplane impacted after entering instrument meteorological conditions. Because aircraft operating in VFR flight are not required to comply with minimum instrument altitudes, aircraft receiving VFR radar services are not automatically afforded Minimum Safe Altitude Warning services except by pilot request. The controller's query to the pilot about his altitude and flight conditions was based on her observation of the loss of altitude reporting information. The pilot had not indicated any difficulty in maintaining VFR flight or terrain clearance up to that point. His comment that the aircraft was "in and out of some clouds" was her first indication that the pilot was not operating in visual conditions, and came within seconds of impact with the terrain. The controller was engaged in trying to correct the situation, and despite having been advised of the minimum vectoring altitude, the pilot continued to descend. The airplane was equipped with a terrain avoidance warning system but it could not be determined if it was functional. The pilot owned the charter operation. Documents discovered in the wreckage identified the pilot and airplane as operating for a different company since the pilot did not have the permissions necessary to operate in the United Kingdom Overseas Territories.

### Flight Events

Enroute-descent - VFR encounter with IMC  
Enroute-descent - Controlled flight into terr/obj (CFIT)

### Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's continued visual flight into instrument meteorological conditions, which resulted in an in-flight collision with terrain.

### Findings

Personnel issues-Action/decision-Info processing/decision-Decision making/judgment-Pilot - C  
 Personnel issues-Task performance-Use of equip/info-Use of policy/procedure-Pilot - C  
 Environmental issues-Conditions/weather/phenomena-Ceiling/visibility/precip-Clouds-Effect on personnel  
 Environmental issues-Conditions/weather/phenomena-Ceiling/visibility/precip-Low visibility-Effect on personnel  
 Environmental issues-Conditions/weather/phenomena-Ceiling/visibility/precip-Obscuration-Effect on personnel  
 Environmental issues-Conditions/weather/phenomena-Ceiling/visibility/precip-Rain-Effect on personnel  
 Environmental issues-Conditions/weather/phenomena-Ceiling/visibility/precip-Fog-Effect on personnel

## Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Airline Transport	<b>Age:</b>	52
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Multi-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>	(Estimated) 9600 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Manufacturer:</b>	ROCKWELL INTERNATIONAL	<b>Registration:</b>	N318WA
<b>Model/Series:</b>	690B	<b>Engines:</b>	2 Turbo Prop
<b>Operator:</b>	Webstas Aviation Services	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Garrett
<b>Air Carrier Operating Certificate:</b>	On-demand Air Taxi (135)	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	TPE331-5-252K
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 135: Air Taxi & Commuter - Non-scheduled		

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>		<b>Weather Information Source:</b>	Witness
<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Instrument Conditions	<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	Obscured
<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day	<b>Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:</b>	11 knots, 70°
<b>Temperature:</b>	28° C / 18° C	<b>Visibility</b>	1 Miles
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	Moderate - Rain; Mist; Fog		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	Tortola (TUPJ)	<b>Destination:</b>	San Juan, PR (TSJU)

## Airport Information

<b>Airport:</b>	Luis Munoz Marin Intl Airport (TJSJ)	<b>Runway Surface Type:</b>	Concrete
<b>Runway Used:</b>	10	<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	Dry
<b>Runway Length/Width:</b>	8016 ft / 150 ft		

## Wreckage and Impact Information

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

## Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Todd G Gunther	Adopted Date:	01/07/2011
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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