



National Transportation Safety Board

Aviation Accident Data Summary

Location:	San Marcos, TX	Accident Number:	CEN13FA039
Date & Time:	11/01/2012, 0605 CDT	Registration:	N10PM
Aircraft:	CESSNA 320E	Injuries:	1 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

A fixed-base operator employee observed the pilot preflight his twin-engine airplane and then pulled the pilot's airplane from the hangar. The employee gave the pilot directions to runway 17 but was unable to see him taxi to that location because of fog. The non-instrument-rated pilot subsequently took off in night instrument meteorological conditions with visibility less than 2 1/2 miles. The airplane crashed less than 1 mile south of the airport shortly after takeoff and witnesses saw and heard the resultant explosion. Video footage of the accident revealed that the airplane impacted the ground in a 45-degree nose-down attitude. Examination of the airplane and engines did not reveal any mechanical anomalies that would have precluded normal operation. Based on the wreckage distribution, low visibility, and the pilot's lack of an instrument rating, the accident is consistent with the pilot's loss of control due to spatial disorientation.

Flight Events

Initial climb - Loss of visual reference
 Initial climb - VFR encounter with IMC

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The non-instrument-rated pilot's decision to takeoff in night instrument meteorological conditions, which resulted in spatial disorientation and a loss of control.

Findings

Personnel issues-Experience/knowledge-Experience/qualifications-Total instrument experience-Pilot - C
 Personnel issues-Task performance-Use of equip/info-Aircraft control-Pilot - C
 Environmental issues-Conditions/weather/phenomena-Ceiling/visibility/precip-Fog-Decision related to condition

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	66
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Instrument Rating(s):	None
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Instructor Rating(s):	None
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 783 hours (Total, all aircraft), 29 hours (Total, this make and model), 733 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 0 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 0 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 0 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Manufacturer:	CESSNA	Registration:	N10PM
Model/Series:	320E	Engines:	2 Reciprocating
Operator:	Clarence Schollmeyer	Engine Manufacturer:	CONT MOTOR
Air Carrier Operating Certificate:	None	Engine Model/Series:	TSIO-520-B
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Observation Facility, Elevation:	KHYI, 594 ft msl	Weather Information Source:	Weather Observation Facility
Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions	Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 400 ft agl
Condition of Light:	Night/Dark	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	3 knots, 310°
Temperature:	16°C / 14°C	Visibility	2 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:	Moderate - Low Drifting - Fog		
Departure Point:	San Marcos, TX (KHYI)	Destination:	

Airport Information

Airport:	San Marcos Municipal Airport (KHYI)	Runway Surface Type:	
Runway Used:	N/A	Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Length/Width:			

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	On-Ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	On-Ground

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Joshua D Lindberg	Adopted Date:	06/12/2013
Investigation Docket:	http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/search/dockList.cfm?mKey=85483		

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), established in 1967, is an independent federal agency mandated by Congress through the Independent Safety Board Act of 1974 to investigate transportation accidents, determine the probable causes of the accidents, issue safety recommendations, study transportation safety issues, and evaluate the safety effectiveness of government agencies involved in transportation. The NTSB makes public its actions and decisions through accident reports, safety studies, special investigation reports, safety recommendations, and statistical reviews.

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