



# National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

<b>Location:</b>	Greensburg, IN	<b>Accident Number:</b>	CEN13FA085
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	12/02/2012, 1816 EST	<b>Registration:</b>	N92315
<b>Aircraft:</b>	PIPER PA 46-350P	<b>Injuries:</b>	4 Fatal
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

## Analysis

The instrument-rated private pilot was executing a nonprecision instrument approach procedure at night in deteriorating weather conditions. According to GPS track data, the pilot executed the approach as published but descended below the missed approach point's minimum altitude before executing a climbing right turn. This turn was not consistent with the published missed approach procedure. The airplane then began a series of left and right ascending and descending turns to various altitudes. The last few seconds of recorded data indicated that the airplane entered a descending left turn. Two witnesses heard the airplane fly overhead at a low altitude and described the weather as foggy. Reported weather at a nearby airport about 26 minutes before the accident was visibility less than 2 miles in mist and an overcast ceiling of 300 feet. A friend of the pilot flew the same route in a similarly equipped airplane and arrived about 30 minutes before the accident airplane. He said he performed the same approach to the missed approach point but never broke out of the clouds, so he executed a missed approach and diverted to an alternate airport. A postaccident examination of the airframe and engine revealed no evidence of mechanical malfunctions or failures that would have precluded normal operation.

Federal Aviation Administration Flight Training Handbook Advisory Circular 61-21A cautions that pilots are particularly vulnerable to spatial disorientation during periods of low visibility due to conflicts between what they see and what their supporting senses, such as the inner ear and muscle sense, communicate. The accident airplane's maneuvering flightpath, as recorded by the GPS track data, in night instrument meteorological conditions is consistent with the pilot's loss of airplane control due to spatial disorientation.

## Flight Events

Maneuvering - Loss of control in flight  
Uncontrolled descent - Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)

## Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:  
The pilot's failure to maintain airplane control while maneuvering in night instrument meteorological conditions due to spatial disorientation.

## Findings

Personnel issues-Psychological-Perception/orientation/illusion-Spatial disorientation-Pilot - C  
Personnel issues-Task performance-Use of equip/info-Aircraft control-Pilot - C  
Environmental issues-Conditions/weather/phenomena-Light condition-Dark-Response/compensation - C

## Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	46
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land	Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Instructor Rating(s):	None
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 398 hours (Total, all aircraft), 52 hours (Total, this make and model)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Manufacturer:	PIPER	Registration:	N92315
Model/Series:	PA 46-350P	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Operator:	Donald P. Horan	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
Air Carrier Operating Certificate:	None	Engine Model/Series:	TIO-540 SER
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Observation Facility, Elevation:	BAK, 656 ft msl	Weather Information Source:	Weather Observation Facility
Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions	Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 300 ft agl
Condition of Light:	Night/Dark	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	6 knots, 170°
Temperature:	14° C / 14° C	Visibility	2 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	Destin, FL (KDTS)	Destination:	Greensburg, IN (I34)

## Airport Information

Airport:	Greensburg Municipal Airport (I34)	Runway Surface Type:	N/A
Runway Used:	36	Runway Surface Condition:	Wet
Runway Length/Width:	3433 ft / 40 ft		

## Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	3 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None

## Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Stuart E Bothwell	Adopted Date:	03/24/2014
Investigation Docket:	<a href="http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/search/dockList.cfm?mKey=85716">http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/search/dockList.cfm?mKey=85716</a>		

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.

---

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.