



# National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

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<b>Location:</b>	Santa Paula, CA	<b>Accident Number:</b>	WPR15FA227
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	08/01/2015, 0905 PDT	<b>Registration:</b>	N4CU
<b>Aircraft:</b>	CESSNA P337G	<b>Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

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## Analysis

The noninstrument-rated commercial pilot departed for the cross-country flight over mountainous terrain in instrument meteorological conditions. A witness observed the airplane take off from runway 22, disappear into an overcast layer at 300 ft above ground level (about 550 ft mean sea level [msl]), and then reappear heading in the opposite direction. The witness reported that the airplane departed the traffic pattern heading northeast. The wreckage was located in mountainous terrain at an elevation of 1,223 ft msl, 2.8 mi east of the departure airport. Meteorological data indicated that, at the time of the accident, a cloud layer extended over the accident site from about 550 ft msl to about 2,100 ft msl, and, at the elevation of the accident site, the terrain would have been obscured by clouds. Examination of the wreckage did not reveal evidence of any preimpact mechanical malfunctions or anomalies that would have precluded normal operation of the airframe or engine. The orientation of the wreckage indicated that, at impact, the airplane was heading south and traveling at a ground speed consistent with normal traffic pattern speeds. The damage to the airplane was consistent with controlled flight into the terrain, and the airplane's impact heading was consistent with the pilot attempting to return to the airport when the airplane collided with the rising terrain.

## Flight Events

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

## Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The noninstrument-rated pilot's decision to conduct a visual flight in instrument meteorological conditions, which resulted in controlled flight into mountainous terrain.

## Findings

Personnel issues-Action/decision-Info processing/decision-Decision making/judgment-Pilot - C  
Environmental issues-Conditions/weather/phenomena-Ceiling/visibility/precip-Below VFR minima-  
Effect on personnel - C  
Environmental issues-Physical environment-Terrain-Mountainous/hilly terrain-Contributed to  
outcome - C

## Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Commercial	<b>Age:</b>	82
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land; Single-engine Sea	<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	None
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None
<b>Flight Time:</b>	(Estimated) 3290 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Manufacturer:</b>	CESSNA	<b>Registration:</b>	N4CU
<b>Model/Series:</b>	P337G	<b>Engines:</b>	2 Reciprocating
<b>Operator:</b>	On file	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Rolls Royce
<b>Air Carrier Operating Certificate:</b>	None	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	TSIO-360DG
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	KCMA, 77 ft msl	<b>Weather Information Source:</b>	Weather Observation Facility
<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual Conditions	<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	Overcast / 7 ft agl
<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day	<b>Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:</b>	Calm
<b>Temperature:</b>	21°C / 18°C	<b>Visibility</b>	5 Miles
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	Santa Paula, CA (KSZP)	<b>Destination:</b>	California City, CA (KL71)

## Airport Information

<b>Airport:</b>	Santa Paula (KSZP)	<b>Runway Surface Type:</b>	Asphalt
<b>Runway Used:</b>	22	<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	Dry
<b>Runway Length/Width:</b>	2713 ft / 60 ft		

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Van McKenny	<b>Adopted Date:</b>	11/29/2016
<b>Note:</b>	The NTSB traveled to the scene of this accident.		
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	<a href="http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/search/dockList.cfm?mKey=91687">http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/search/dockList.cfm?mKey=91687</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

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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.