



# National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

---

|                                |                                      |                         |            |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| <b>Location:</b>               | BUTLER, PA                           | <b>Accident Number:</b> | NYC96LA062 |
| <b>Date &amp; Time:</b>        | 02/12/1996, 1010 EST                 | <b>Registration:</b>    | N89HS      |
| <b>Aircraft:</b>               | Piper PA-46-350P                     | <b>Aircraft Damage:</b> | Destroyed  |
| <b>Defining Event:</b>         |                                      | <b>Injuries:</b>        | 2 Serious  |
| <b>Flight Conducted Under:</b> | Part 91: General Aviation - Personal |                         |            |

---

## Analysis

The pilot was conducting an approach to runway 8, during which the left wing contacted the ground approximately 75 feet from the approach end of the runway. The airplane came to rest about 160 feet down the runway, and off the right side. A pilot who landed on runway 26, about 30 minutes prior to the accident flight, stated that the winds were out of the northwest at 15 knots with gusts, and he experienced plus and minus 10 knots on the airspeed while on final approach. The winds 19 miles to the east, at 1045 eastern standard time, were reported from 310 degrees at 15 knots with gusts up to 20 knots. An AIRMET was issued at 0345, with an advisory for occasional moderate turbulence below 8,000 feet. The AIRMET was reissued at 0945, with the added advisory of, 'Low level wind shear potential over the Boston Area Forecast area east of an Erie-Bristol line due to gusty northwesterly surface winds. Conditions ending by 1600.' An FAA Inspector examined the wreckage and found no preimpact anomalies with the airplane.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the pilot's inadequate compensation for wind conditions during the final approach, which resulted in the uncontrolled descent and subsequent collision with the ground. A contributing factor is windshear conditions.

## Findings

---

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT

Phase of Operation: APPROACH - VFR PATTERN - FINAL APPROACH

Findings

1. WEATHER CONDITION - GUSTS
2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - WINDSHEAR
3. (C) COMPENSATION FOR WIND CONDITIONS - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND

-----

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

4. TERRAIN CONDITION - GROUND

## Factual Information

On February 12, 1996 about 1010 eastern standard time, a Piper PA-46-350P, N89HS, was destroyed when it collided with the ground while on final approach to the Butler County K W Scholter Field, Butler, Pennsylvania. The commercial pilot and passenger received serious injuries. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the flight that departed Erie, Pennsylvania. There was no flight plan for the personal flight conducted under 14 CFR Part 91.

According to a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Inspector, the pilot was conducting a visual approach to runway 8 when the left wing collided with the ground approximately 75 feet from the approach end of the runway. The airplane came to rest about 160 feet down the runway, and off the right side. Postaccident examination of the wreckage by the FAA Inspector revealed no preimpact anomalies with the airframe or engine.

A pilot, who landed approximately 30 minutes prior to the accident flight, stated that on his approach and landing to runway 26, there were intermittent snow showers, and the visibility was less than 2 miles. He observed the wind sock and estimated the winds were from the northwest at 10 to 15 knots with gusts, and he experienced turbulence with the airspeed varying plus or minus 10 knots. At the time of the accident, the pilot observed a snow squall over the airport and stated that the visibility was considerably less

A National Transportation Safety Board meteorology report stated that an airman's meteorological information (AIRMET) inflight weather advisory was issued for occasional moderate turbulence below 8,000 feet, at 0345, and valid for the Butler area. The AIRMET was reissued, at 0945, and continued to advise of similar conditions. In addition, the 0945 AIRMET added the following, "Low level wind shear potential over the Boston Area Forecast area east of an Erie-Bristol line due to gusty northwesterly surface winds. Conditions ending by 1600."

At Beaver County Airport, Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, 19 miles to the east of Butler, the weather was reported at 0945 as, estimated ceiling 3000 broken, visibility 20 miles, winds from 310 degrees at 15 knots; and at 1045 as, estimated ceiling 3000 broken, visibility 20 miles, winds from 310 degrees at 15 knots with gusts up to 20 knots.

On March 17, the pilot succumbed from the injuries received during the accident.

## Pilot Information

|                                  |  |  |                            |
|----------------------------------|--|--|----------------------------|
| <b>Certificate:</b>              | Commercial                             | <b>Age:</b>                              | 60, Male                   |
| <b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>       | Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land  | <b>Seat Occupied:</b>                    | Left                       |
| <b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b> | None                                   | <b>Restraint Used:</b>                   | Seatbelt, Shoulder harness |
| <b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>     | Airplane                               | <b>Second Pilot Present:</b>             | No                         |
| <b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>     | None                                   | <b>Toxicology Performed:</b>             | No                         |
| <b>Medical Certification:</b>    | Class 2 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim. | <b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>            | 02/02/1995                 |
| <b>Occupational Pilot:</b>       |  | <b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b> |                            |
| <b>Flight Time:</b>              | 6000 hours (Total, all aircraft)       |  |                            |

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

|                                      |                        |                                       |                 |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Aircraft Make:</b>                | Piper                  | <b>Registration:</b>                  | N89HS           |
| <b>Model/Series:</b>                 | PA-46-350P PA-46-350P  | <b>Aircraft Category:</b>             | Airplane        |
| <b>Year of Manufacture:</b>          |                        | <b>Amateur Built:</b>                 |                 |
| <b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>    | Normal                 | <b>Serial Number:</b>                 | 4622033         |
| <b>Landing Gear Type:</b>            | Retractable - Tricycle | <b>Seats:</b>                         | 6               |
| <b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b> | 09/01/1995, Annual     | <b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>       | 4300 lbs        |
| <b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>   | 123 Hours              | <b>Engines:</b>                       | 1 Reciprocating |
| <b>Airframe Total Time:</b>          | 1550 Hours             | <b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>           | Lycoming        |
| <b>ELT:</b>                          | Installed              | <b>Engine Model/Series:</b>           | TIO-540-AE2A    |
| <b>Registered Owner:</b>             | HARRINGTON, GEORGE R.  | <b>Rated Power:</b>                   | 350 hp          |
| <b>Operator:</b>                     | HARRINGTON, GEORGE R.  | <b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b> | None            |

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

|                                  |                      |   |                   |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|---|-------------------|
| Conditions at Accident Site:     | Visual Conditions    | Condition of Light:                     | Day               |
| Observation Facility, Elevation: | BVI, 1253 ft msl     | Distance from Accident Site:            | 19 Nautical Miles |
| Observation Time:                | 1045 EST             | Direction from Accident Site:           | 95°               |
| Lowest Cloud Condition:          | Unknown / 0 ft agl   | Visibility                              | 20 Miles          |
| Lowest Ceiling:                  | Broken / 3000 ft agl | Visibility (RVR):                       | 0 ft              |
| Wind Speed/Gusts:                | 15 knots / 20 knots  | Turbulence Type<br>Forecast/Actual:     | /                 |
| Wind Direction:                  | 310°                 | Turbulence Severity<br>Forecast/Actual: | /                 |
| Altimeter Setting:               | 29 inches Hg         | Temperature/Dew Point:                  | -7° C / -13° C    |
| Precipitation and Obscuration:   |                      |   |                   |
| Departure Point:                 | ERIE, PA (ERI)       | Type of Flight Plan Filed:              | None              |
| Destination:                     | (BTP)                | Type of Clearance:                      | None              |
| Departure Time:                  | 0000                 | Type of Airspace:                       | Class G           |

## Airport Information

|                      |                     |                           |           |
|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------|
| Airport:             | BUTLER COUNTY (BTP) | Runway Surface Type:      | Asphalt   |
| Airport Elevation:   | 1248 ft             | Runway Surface Condition: | Snow--dry |
| Runway Used:         | 8                   | IFR Approach:             | None      |
| Runway Length/Width: | 4005 ft / 100 ft    | VFR Approach/Landing:     | Full Stop |

## Wreckage and Impact Information

|                     |           |                      |           |
|---------------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------|
| Crew Injuries:      | 1 Serious | Aircraft Damage:     | Destroyed |
| Passenger Injuries: | 1 Serious | Aircraft Fire:       | None      |
| Ground Injuries:    | N/A       | Aircraft Explosion:  | None      |
| Total Injuries:     | 2 Serious | Latitude, Longitude: |           |

## Administrative Information

|                                   |  |              |            |
|-----------------------------------|--|--------------|------------|
| Investigator In Charge (IIC):     | RANDI-JEAN KUKLA   | Report Date: | 07/11/1996 |
| Additional Participating Persons: | DARRELL R MILLER; WEST MIFFLIN, PA   |              |            |
| Publish Date:                     |  |              |            |
| 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> . |              |            |

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. A factual report that may be admissible under 49 U.S.C. § 1154(b) is available [here](#).