



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	NORTHAMPTON, MA	Accident Number:	NYC00LA252
Date & Time:	09/07/2000, 0755 EDT	Registration:	N601WK
Aircraft:	Piper PA-60-601P	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The airport consisted of a single runway oriented on a heading of 140/320 degrees. A taxiway oriented on a 120 degree heading intersected the runway at its midpoint. The pilot reported that the visibility was 500-1,000 feet with fog at the time of departure. Before he took off, the pilot asked his passenger to walk the length of the runway to observe any obstructions, due to the reduced visibility. The pilot then taxied to the run-up pad, set the heading of his HSI to 120 degrees, and initiated the takeoff. When the airspeed reached 80 knots, the pilot realized he had initiated the takeoff on the taxiway instead of the runway. He aborted the takeoff and attempted to maneuver the airplane to the runway. The airplane crossed the runway, impacted a tree, and came to rest upright in a cornfield. The weather reported at the time of the accident at an airport 9 miles away was: wind from 320 degrees at 2 knots; visibility 1/16 mile with fog; sky partially obscured; ceiling 200 feet overcast.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's improper preflight planning which resulted in an attempted takeoff from a taxiway. A factor in the accident was the fog.

Findings

Occurrence #1: ON GROUND/WATER COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - ABORTED

Findings

1. OBJECT - TREE(S)
2. (C) PREFLIGHT PLANNING/PREPARATION - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - FOG

Factual Information

On September 7, 2000, at 0755 Eastern Daylight Time, a Piper PA-60-601P, N601WK, was substantially damaged during takeoff at the Northampton Airport (7B2), Northampton, Massachusetts. The certificated commercial pilot and passenger were not injured. Instrument meteorological conditions prevailed and an instrument flight plan was filed for the personal flight conducted under 14 CFR Part 91.

The pilot reported in a telephone interview that 7B2 consisted of a single runway oriented on a 140/320 degree heading. The taxiway, which intersected Runway 14 at its midpoint, was oriented on a 120 degree heading. The pilot had parked at the fixed base operator (FBO), located south of Runway 14, when he arrived at the airport the previous day.

Before departure from 7B2, the pilot instructed the passenger to "walk the length of the runway" and observe any obstructions, because the weather was "foggy, with 500-1,000 feet visibility."

According to a written statement submitted by the pilot, he said:

"I taxied to the asphalt pad by the FBO, completed my run-up and received clearance to depart from Bradley Approach. We were relatively lightly loaded, with about 100 gallons of gas, two people and no bags, or about 700 pounds under gross and with the "balance" right in the middle of the envelope. I expected about a 1500' takeoff roll given the weight, the 'Superstar I' engine modification, and the cool (60 degree) sea level (122') environment. I had the approach plate (NOS) on my clipboard on my lap and reviewed the small diagram, but only 'saw' the 14-32 runway."

"I took what I thought was the runway and accelerated for takeoff. As we hit about 80 knots (rotation was to be at 95), I realized to my dismay that we were actually on the 1000' long taxiway angling at a heading of 120 degrees into about the middle of Runway 14 and not on the runway, as I had believed."

"I immediately chopped the power and applied maximum braking. I attempted to make the 20-degree turn to line up with the runway where the taxiway intersected, but was primarily focused on not ground looping or cartwheeling. We missed the runway, but I got the plane turned to 140 degrees on the wet grass just at the very edge of the field, with the left wing hitting the brush along the edge. I almost thought that we would be able to stay in the runway environment, when the left wing hit an 8-10' tree and we spun down a 10' slope, crossed a dirt road, lost our gear, and slid into a cornfield. I was able to get the engines shut down, mags, fuel, mixtures and battery off by the time we stopped. There was no fire despite losing the 30 gallons from the left wing and a smaller fuel leak from the right wing."

In a subsequent telephone interview, the pilot stated that he aligned his horizontal situational indicator (HSI) to a magnetic heading of 120 degrees while he was parked at the FBO. He reported that he did not check the HSI again before takeoff.

According to the airport manager at 7B2, the taxiway which the pilot began his takeoff from was painted with a 120 degree marking and a 15 foot long yellow centerline. The taxiway extended from a compass rose painted on the surface. Additionally, Runway 14/32 was "clearly painted," including centerline markings, threshold markings, and runway identification numbers. Runway 14 was 3,500 feet long and 50 feet wide, with a 300 foot

displaced threshold. The runway lights were non-standard, but "worked well."

The weather reported at 0755, at an airport 9 miles away was: wind from 320 degrees at 2 knots; visibility 1/16 mile with fog; sky partially obscured; ceiling 200 feet overcast; temperature 43 degrees F; dew point 43 degrees F.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	56, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt, Shoulder harness
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	03/30/2000
Occupational Pilot:	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:		
Flight Time:	4280 hours (Total, all aircraft), 2641 hours (Total, this make and model), 4200 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 41 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N601WK
Model/Series:	PA-60-601P PA-60-601P	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	61P079288063
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	6
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	05/29/2000, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	6000 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	53 Hours	Engines:	2 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	3595 Hours	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	IO-540
Registered Owner:	IEG VENTURE MANAGEMENT INC	Rated Power:	319 hp
Operator:	IEG VENTURE MANAGEMENT INC	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	CEF, 245 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	8 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	0755 EDT	Direction from Accident Site:	170°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown / 0 ft agl	Visibility	0.06 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 200 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	2 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	320°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	6° C / 6° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	(7B2)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	IFR
Destination:	POGHKEEPSIE, NY (POU)	Type of Clearance:	IFR
Departure Time:	0755 EDT	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	NORTHAMPTON AIRPORT (7B2)	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	122 ft	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	14	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	3506 ft / 50 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	DAVID MUZIO	Report Date:	07/02/2001
Additional Participating Persons:	DAVID CARREAU; WINDSOR LOCKS, CT		
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 pubinquiry@ntsb.gov , or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/ .		

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