



# National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

---

<b>Location:</b>	TEMPLE BAR, AZ	<b>Accident Number:</b>	LAX92FA058
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	12/10/1991, 1642 MST	<b>Registration:</b>	N350MR
<b>Aircraft:</b>	PIPER PA31-350	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Destroyed
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	5 Fatal

**Flight Conducted Under:** Part 135: Air Taxi & Commuter - Scheduled

---

## Analysis

THE COMMUTER FLIGHT WAS ENROUTE TO ITS HOME AIRPORT AND OVER MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN WHEN IT ENCOUNTERED LOW CEILINGS AND RAIN SHOWERS. THE AIRPLANE WAS NOT CERTIFICATED FOR IFR COMMUTER FLIGHTS. INSTEAD OF GOING TO AN ALTERNATE AIRPORT THE PILOT ATTEMPTED TO MAINTAIN VISUAL CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED AND RECEIVED A VISUAL CLEARANCE INTO THE TCA AND ADVISED THE CONTROLLER THAT HIS ALTITUDE WAS 5100 FEET MSL. HIS RADIO TRANSMISSION BECAME GARBLED DURING THE CLEARANCE READ BACK AND SHORTLY THEREAFTER THE CONTROLLER OBSERVED THE AIRPLANE'S RADAR TARGET TURN LEFT FROM ITS WESTERLY TRACK AND DISAPPEAR FROM HIS SCOPE. THERE WERE NO FURTHER COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THE PILOT AND THE CONTROLLER. WHEN THE AIRCRAFT FAILED TO ARRIVE AT ITS DESTINATION AN ALNOT WAS ISSUED. EARLY THE NEXT MORNING THE AIRCRAFT'S WRECKAGE WAS FOUND IMPACTED IN A MOUNTAIN APPROXIMATELY 10 MILES SOUTH OF COURSE AT AN ELEVATION OF 4100 FEET MSL. THE INVESTIGATION REVEALED THAT THE PILOT HAD PREVIOUSLY AND SUCCESSFULLY FLOWN THE ACCIDENT AIRPLANE IN IFR CONDITIONS.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE PILOT-IN-COMMAND'S POOR INFLIGHT DECISION BY NOT ELECTING TO PROCEED TO AN ALTERNATE AIRPORT AND TO CONTINUE TO THE FLIGHT UNDER VISUAL FLIGHT RULES INTO INSTRUMENT METEOROLOGICAL CONDITIONS. THE LOW CEILINGS AND VISIBILITIES ACROSS THE FLIGHT ROUTE AND THE MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN WERE FACTORS IN THE ACCIDENT.

## Findings

---

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER  
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

### Findings

1. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - MOUNTAINOUS/HILLY
2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - LOW CEILING
3. (C) IN-FLIGHT PLANNING/DECISION - POOR - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (C) NOT PERFORMED - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. (C) VFR FLIGHT INTO IMC - ATTEMPTED - PILOT IN COMMAND

## Factual Information

### Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Airline Transport	<b>Age:</b>	44, 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
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	Airplane	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	Yes
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 1 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	10/16/1991
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>		
<b>Flight Time:</b>	2972 hours (Total, all aircraft), 654 hours (Total, this make and model), 205 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 37 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

### Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	PIPER	<b>Registration:</b>	N350MR
<b>Model/Series:</b>	PA31-350 PA31-350	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Airplane
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	No
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	317652100
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Retractable - Tricycle	<b>Seats:</b>	10
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	12/01/1991, AAIP	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	7000 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>	13 Hours	<b>Engines:</b>	2 Reciprocating
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	7433 Hours	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	LYCOMING
<b>ELT:</b>	Installed, activated, aided in locating accident	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	TSIO-540-J2BD
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	FAIRCHILD FEDERAL CREDIT UNION	<b>Rated Power:</b>	300 hp
<b>Operator:</b>	LAS VEGAS AIRLINES, INC.	<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	Commuter Air Carrier (135); On-demand Air Taxi (135)
<b>Operator Does Business As:</b>		<b>Operator Designator Code:</b>	LVAA

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions	Condition of Light:	Night/Dark
Observation Facility, Elevation:	LAS, 2174 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	26 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	1650 MST	Direction from Accident Site:	259°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 3000 ft agl	Visibility	35 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 6000 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	5 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	170°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	11° C / 7° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	GRAND CANYON, AZ (GCN)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	Unknown
Destination:	LAS VEGAS, NV (VGT)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	1601 MST	Type of Airspace:	Class G

## Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	4 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	On-Ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	5 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	

## Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	James A Wall	Report Date:	04/23/1993
Additional Participating Persons:	ASI DALE NELSON; LAS VEGAS, NV GREG ERICKSON; WILLIAMSPORT, PA TIM HARDEE; OLATHE, KS		
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](#).