

# SAFETY GRAM 4.0

May 2019





## **SAFETY GRAM**

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### Case:

Reference NTSB Aviation Accident Factual Report (3 Pages)

### Questions (No right or wrong):

- What does AFI 34-117 require for landing Aero Club aircraft?
- What are your local rules for landing Aero Club aircraft?
- What constitutes a suitable emergency airfield?
- Can you land at private airfields without permission?
- Would striking a tree with a wing render an aircraft un-airworthy until an inspection could be completed?
- What is a NTSB Pilot/Operator Aircraft Accident/Incident Form 6120.1?

### Discussion:

It is difficult to read the NTSB report associated with this Safety Gram and not question the judgement of the two mishap pilots involved. The decision to land at a private airfield, deciding to land on an airfield with obstructions on the runway, maneuvering the aircraft in such a way as to sustain a wing strike on a tree and continuing the approach, with possibly a structurally compromised aircraft, using a slip all cause me to wonder what they were thinking!

I also believe it is important for us, as pilots trying to learn, to remember that aviators never take-off intending to crash their aircraft. We are better served trying to understand the events leading to a decision, the decision making environment and mechanisms that could interrupt potentially dangerous decision making logic. Unfortunately the FAA doesn't provide much information on the events or reasons the pilots in this mishap may have acted the way they did. I

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think we can infer one main point though. This mishap is based in a lack of discipline. The decision to land at a private airfield then to continue actions that limited options are fundamentally born of a cavalier approach to the flight.

Flying in challenging environments can be immensely rewarding but require a level of planning and preparation that is not needed when doing a local pattern sortie. The old saying that there are old pilots and there are bold pilot but there are no old bold pilots is as true as it's ever been. When you decide to fly somewhere new do the right thing and plan your flight then fly your plan.

**CONTINUE TO FLY SAFE!**



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# National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

|                                |                                      |                         |            |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| <b>Location:</b>               | Valley Springs, CA                   | <b>Accident Number:</b> | WPR18CA048 |
| <b>Date &amp; Time:</b>        | 12/14/2017, 1344 PST                 | <b>Registration:</b>    | N54873     |
| <b>Aircraft:</b>               | CESSNA 172P                          | <b>Injuries:</b>        | 2 Serious  |
| <b>Flight Conducted Under:</b> | Part 91: General Aviation - Personal |                         |            |

## Analysis

The two commercial pilots reported that the purpose of the flight was to identify suitable emergency landing sites in the area. They located a small private airport, and they decided to make a landing. The right-seat pilot took control and made a low pass over the runway and saw piles of gravel blocking half the width of the runway. He decided to attempt a short-field landing. While maneuvering for landing, the airplane was in a left bank turn when the wing collided with a tree. The pilot applied rudder control and thought about going around but decided against it due to trees blocking the runway. He entered the airplane into a left-wing-down slip as he tried to keep the airplane as level as possible. The airplane touched down on the right landing gear, and the right wing dug into the dirt. The airplane subsequently came to rest inverted.

During the accident sequence, the airplane sustained substantial damage to the fuselage, empennage, and wing.

The pilot reported that there were no preaccident mechanical failures or malfunctions with the airplane or engine that would have precluded normal operation.

Neither pilot submitted the National Transportation Safety Board Pilot/Operator Aircraft Accident/Incident Form 6120.1.

## Flight Events

Landing - Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)

Landing - Roll over

## Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

The pilot's failure to maintain clearance from trees while maneuvering for landing and his decision to land on a surface with obstructions.

## Findings

Aircraft-Aircraft oper/perf/capability-Performance/control parameters-Altitude-Not attained/maintained - C  
 Personnel issues-Psychological-Attention/monitoring-Monitoring environment-Pilot - C  
 Personnel issues-Action/decision-Info processing/decision-Decision making/judgment-Pilot - C  
 Environmental issues-Physical environment-Object/animal/substance-Tree(s)-Effect on operation - C  
 Environmental issues-Physical environment-Object/animal/substance-Debris/dirt/foreign object-Decision related to condition

### Pilot Information

|                           |                                       |                       |  |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Certificate:              | Flight Instructor; Commercial         | Age:                  | 72   |
| Airplane Rating(s):       | Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land | Instrument Rating(s): | Airplane   |
| Other Aircraft Rating(s): | Helicopter                            | Instructor Rating(s): | Airplane Multi-engine; Airplane Single-engine; Instrument Airplane |

Flight Time:

### Pilot-Rated Passenger Information

|                           |                                       |                       |                        |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Certificate:              | Commercial                            | Age:                  | 75                     |
| Airplane Rating(s):       | Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land | Instrument Rating(s): | Airplane               |
| Other Aircraft Rating(s): | None                                  | Instructor Rating(s): | Airplane Single-engine |

Flight Time:

### Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

|                                |                                      |                      |                 |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Aircraft Make:                 | CESSNA                               | Registration:        | N54873          |
| Model/Series:                  | 172P P                               | Engines:             | 1 Reciprocating |
| Operator:                      | On file                              | Engine Manufacturer: | LYCOMING        |
| Operating Certificate(s) Held: | None                                 | Engine Model/Series: | O-320 SERIES    |
| Flight Conducted Under:        | Part 91: General Aviation - Personal |                      |                 |

### Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

|                                  |                                  |                              |                          |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Conditions at Accident Site:     | Visual Conditions                | Condition of Light:          | Day                      |
| Observation Facility, Elevation: | KO22, 2120 ft msl                | Weather Information Source:  | Unknown                  |
| Lowest Ceiling:                  | None                             | Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction: | Calm / ,                 |
| Temperature:                     | 20° C                            | Visibility                   | 10 Miles                 |
| Precipitation and Obscuration:   | No Obscuration; No Precipitation |                              |                          |
| Departure Point:                 | RANCHO MURIETA, CA (RIU)         | Destination:                 | Valley Springs, CA (UNK) |

## Airport Information

|                      |                                      |                           |  |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Airport:             | Wagon Wheel Ranch Privat Strip (UNK) | Runway Surface Type:      |  |
| Runway Used:         | N/A                                  | Runway Surface Condition: |  |
| Runway Length/Width: |                                      |                           |  |

## Wreckage and Impact Information

|                      |                              |                     |             |
|----------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Crew Injuries:       | 2 Serious                    | Aircraft Damage:    | Substantial |
| Passenger Injuries:  | N/A                          | Aircraft Fire:      | None        |
| Ground Injuries:     | N/A                          | Aircraft Explosion: | None        |
| Latitude, Longitude: | 38.086111, -120.758611 (est) |                     |             |

## Administrative Information

|                               |   |               |            |
|-------------------------------|---|---------------|------------|
| Investigator In Charge (IIC): | Andrew L Swick  | Adopted Date: | 06/14/2018 |
| Note:                         | This accident report documents the factual circumstances of this accident as described to the NTSB.                             |               |            |
| Investigation Docket:         | <a href="http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/search/dockList.cfm?mKey=96488">http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/search/dockList.cfm?mKey=96488</a> |               |            |

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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.