



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Mount Vernon, Alabama	Accident Number:	ERA24LA060
Date & Time:	December 8, 2023, 16:11 UTC	Registration:	N5952T
Aircraft:	Cessna 150	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Low altitude operation/event	Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot reported that he and a passenger had departed for a local sight-seeing flight and while flying low over a river the left wing impacted the water. The impact “pulled the plane into the river,” which resulted in substantial damage to the forward fuselage, wings, and tail structure. The pilot reported that there were no pre-accident mechanic malfunctions or failures with the airplane that would have precluded normal operation.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

The pilot’s decision to operate the airplane at a low altitude over a river, and his failure to maintain clearance from the river while maneuvering.

Findings

Personnel issues	Decision making/judgment - Pilot
Aircraft	Altitude - Not attained/maintained

Factual Information

History of Flight

Maneuvering-low-alt flying	Low altitude operation/event (Defining event)
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Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	27,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Lap only
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	August 4, 2020
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	155.5 hours (Total, all aircraft), 143.2 hours (Total, this make and model), 101.9 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 12.2 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 12.2 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Passenger Information

Certificate:		Age:	Male
Airplane Rating(s):		Seat Occupied:	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):		Restraint Used:	Lap only
Instrument Rating(s):		Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):		Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:		Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:			

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Cessna	Registration:	N5952T
Model/Series:	150 D	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1964	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Utility	Serial Number:	15060652
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	July 3, 2023 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1500 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	4347 Hrs as of last inspection	Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	Installed	Engine Model/Series:	O-200
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	100 Horsepower
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	MOB, 221 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	31 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	10:56 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	209°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 3500 ft AGL	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 15000 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	5 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	None / Unknown
Wind Direction:	90°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	N/A / Light
Altimeter Setting:	30.13 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	18°C / 12°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	St. Elmo, AL (2R5)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	St. Elmo, AL (2R5)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	09:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

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:	31.146308,-87.940256(est)

Preventing Similar Accidents

Manage Risk: Good Decision-making and Risk Management Practices are Critical (SA-023)

The Problem

Although few pilots knowingly accept severe risks, accidents can also result when several risks of marginal severity are not identified or are ineffectively managed by the pilot and compound into a dangerous situation. Accidents also result when the pilot does not accurately perceive situations that involve high levels of risk. Ineffective risk management or poor aeronautical decision-making can be associated with almost any type of fatal general aviation accident.

What can you do?

- Develop good decision-making practices that will allow you to identify personal attitudes that are hazardous to safe flying, apply behavior modification techniques, recognize and cope with stress, and effectively use all resources. Understand the safety hazards associated with human fatigue and strive to eliminate fatigue contributors in your life.
- Understand that effective risk management takes practice. It is a decision-making process by which you can systematically identify hazards, assess the degree of risk, and determine the best course of action.

- Be honest with yourself and your passengers about your skill level and proficiency. Refuse to allow external pressures, such as the desire to save time or money or the fear of disappointing passengers, to influence you to attempt or continue a flight in conditions in which you are not comfortable.
- Be honest with yourself and the FAA about your medical condition. If you have a medical condition or are taking any medication, do not fly until your fitness for flight has been thoroughly evaluated.
- Plan ahead with flight diversion or cancellation alternatives, and brief your passengers about the alternatives before the flight.

See <https://www.nts.gov/Advocacy/safety-alerts/Documents/SA-023.pdf> for additional resources.

The NTSB presents this information to prevent recurrence of similar accidents. Note that this should not be considered guidance from the regulator, nor does this supersede existing FAA Regulations (FARs).

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Enders, Ryan
Additional Participating Persons:	Joel Clark; FAA/FSDO; Birmingham, AL
Original Publish Date:	January 25, 2024
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 4
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=193506

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person” (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available [here](#).