

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.

FOR RELEASE: 6:30 P.M., E.D.S.T., JUNE 25, 1975

ISSUED: June 25, 1975

Forwarded to:

Honorable James E. Dow
Acting Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
Washington, D. C. 20591

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

A-75-53

On the afternoon of June 22, 1974, at Petersburg Municipal Airport, Petersburg, Virginia, two persons were killed in a Cessna 402B during an attempted go-around from a wheels-up touchdown. The National Transportation Safety Board's investigation of the accident disclosed safety information which should be made available to pilots. The Safety Board believes that if FAA's Accident Prevention personnel would make pilots aware of the operational details of this accident, similar accidents could be prevented.

The pilot, who was relatively unfamiliar with the particular airplane model, had performed a touch-and-go landing immediately before the accident. He then retracted the landing gear but did not reextend it during the subsequent approach. As the airplane began to touch down a second time, the propellers of each engine gouged into the asphalt runway surface, resulting in extensive damage to the blades.

The pilot reacted by initiating a go-around. However, flying speed was not or could not be maintained, and the airplane rolled to the right, then to the left, pitched up, rolled back to the right, and crashed. It exploded on impact and burned.

The pilot's decision to go around appears to have been a judgmental error. It was, however, an almost instinctive reaction in an effort to extricate himself from a very untenable position. If, on the other hand, the pilot had been mentally preconditioned for such an eventuality, specifically in regard to the irreversibility of a wheels-up touchdown under these specific circumstances, we believe that he would have stayed on the ground and probably suffered no injury.

Pilots of retractable gear airplanes must maintain a continuing vigil, particularly when touch-and-go landings are conducted, in order to avoid a wheels-up landing or a tragic wheels-up occurrence such as this one. More importantly, however, if a wheels-up contact with the runway does occur, the pilot should be aware that structural damage, low airspeed, high decelerative forces, or engine/propeller damage can make an attempted go-around hazardous.

Of the 144 wheels-up landing accidents which occurred in 1973, only 3 involved serious injury. Six of the accidents involved minor injuries, and the remaining 135 accidents involved no injuries at all.

There are clearly a number of important safety messages associated with the operational circumstances of the above accident, and the details and safety implications should be disseminated to and discussed with pilots at every appropriate opportunity.

Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the Federal Aviation Administration's Accident Prevention Staff, including the Regional Coordinators, the Accident Prevention Specialists, and the Accident Prevention Counselors:

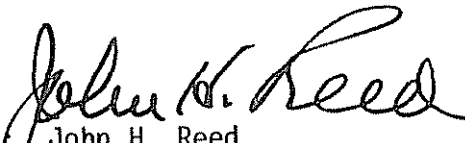
Schedule discussion of the operational circumstances of this accident at the various pilot safety meetings, seminars, and clinics which are scheduled throughout the year. (Class III)

Honorable James E. Dow

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A member of our Bureau of Aviation Safety will be made available to provide your staff with the details of this accident and to assist them in connection with any questions they may have regarding this matter.

REED, Chairman, THAYER and BURGESS, Members, concurred in the above recommendation. McADAMS and HALEY, Members, dissented.


By: John H. Reed
Chairman

THIS RECOMMENDATION WILL BE RELEASED TO THE PUBLIC ON THE ISSUE DATE SHOWN ABOVE. NO PUBLIC DISSEMINATION OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS DOCUMENT SHOULD BE MADE PRIOR TO THAT DATE.