

Brief of Accident

Adopted 05/15/2012

CEN12FA083  
File No. 29769                      11/26/2011                      Crystal Lake, IL                      Aircraft Reg No. N223CD                      Time (Local): 10:26 CST

Make/Model: Cirrus Design Corp / SR20  
Engine Make/Model: Continental / IO-360-ES  
Aircraft Damage: Substantial  
Number of Engines: 1  
Operating Certificate(s): None  
Type of Flight Operation: Personal  
Reg. Flight Conducted Under: Part 91: General Aviation

	Fatal	Serious	Minor/None
Crew	1	0	0
Pass	3	0	0

Last Depart. Point: Marion, IN  
Destination: West Chicago, IL  
Airport Proximity: Off Airport/Airstrip

Condition of Light: Day  
Weather Info Src: Weather Observation Facility  
Basic Weather: Instrument Conditions  
Lowest Ceiling: 900 Ft. AGL, Overcast  
Visibility: 2.00 SM  
Wind Dir/Speed: 170 / 011 Kts  
Temperature (°C): 10  
Precip/Obscuration: Light - Rain; Mist

Pilot-in-Command                      Age: 46

Flight Time (Hours)

Certificate(s)/Rating(s)  
Private; Single-engine Land

Total All Aircraft: 207  
Last 90 Days: 27  
Total Make/Model: 114  
Total Instrument Time: 3

Instrument Ratings  
None

\*\*\* Note: NTSB investigators either traveled in support of this investigation or conducted a significant amount of investigative work without any travel, and used data obtained from various sources to prepare this aircraft accident report. \*\*\*

The noninstrument-rated pilot was conducting the accident flight under visual flight rules (VFR) without a flight plan. The pilot contacted the tower air traffic controller at the intended destination airport and inquired about landing. The controller informed him that the airport was currently under instrument flight rules (IFR). About 30 seconds later, the pilot informed the controller that he had inadvertently flown over the airport. The controller ultimately cleared the flight to land; however, the pilot decided not to land, informing the controller that he did not want to get delayed at the airport due to the weather. The pilot subsequently told the controller that the flight was "in and out of the clouds." After asking the pilot if he was IFR qualified (and learning that the pilot was not), the controller transferred the flight to the local radar-equipped approach control facility for further assistance. That controller advised the pilot of several airports in the vicinity that were under VFR. After initially indicating that he would divert to one of those airports, the pilot told the controller that he did not want to "mess with the weather" and did not want to "get stuck in here," and he declined to proceed to that airport. Radar data depicted that, shortly after the pilot's radio transmission, the airplane entered a gentle right turn. About 90 seconds later, the right turn tightened abruptly, consistent with the airplane entering a steep spiral. The last 19 seconds of radar data depicted the airplane entering a climb of about 2,500 feet per minute (fpm) followed by an approximate 3,600-fpm descent. Witnesses reported hearing an airplane overhead, but they were not able to see it due to the cloud cover. They described the sound as similar to an airplane performing aerobatics. The witnesses subsequently observed the airplane below the

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clouds in a steep, nose-down attitude before it struck the ground. Based on reported weather conditions in the vicinity of the accident site, the flight encountered instrument meteorological conditions. A postaccident examination of the airplane did not reveal any anomalies consistent with a preimpact failure or malfunction.

Updated at May 15 2012 10:34AM

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OCCURRENCES

Enroute - VFR encounter with IMC  
Enroute - Loss of control in flight  
Uncontrolled descent - Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)

FINDINGS

Personnel issues-Action/decision-Info processing/decision-Decision making/judgment-Pilot - C  
Personnel issues-Psychological-Perception/orientation/illu-sio-Spatial disorientation-Pilot - C  
Personnel issues-Task performance-Use of equip/info-Aircraft control-Pilot - C  
Environmental issues-Conditions/weather/phenomena-Ceiling/visibility/precip-Below VFR minima-Effect on operation

Findings Legend: (C) = Cause, (F) = Factor

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

The noninstrument-rated pilot's decision to continue flight in instrument meteorological conditions, which resulted in the pilot's spatial disorientation and loss of control of the airplane.