



Australian Government

Australian Transport Safety Bureau

ATSB TRANSPORT SAFETY INVESTIGATION REPORT

Aviation Serious Incident Report – 200506646

Final

Near ground collision - Bankstown Airport, NSW

15 Dec 2005

Piper PA-28-151 Warrior, VH-LMY

Piper PA31-350 Chieftain, VH-HJS



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Near ground collision - Bankstown Airport, NSW - 15 Dec 2005. Piper PA-28-151 Warrior, VH-LMY / Piper PA31-350 Chieftain, VH-HJS

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Abstract

At approximately 2200 Eastern Daylight-saving Time on 15 December 2005, the pilot of a Piper PA-31-350 Chieftain aircraft, registered VH-HJS, was approaching Bankstown Airport to land on Runway 11. Following touchdown, the pilot of the Chieftain noticed another aircraft on the right side of the runway and took avoiding action by manoeuvring to the left, off the runway sealed surface and on to the grass, to prevent a collision. The pilot of the Chieftain reported that the other aircraft appeared to have only a dim tail light on at the time.

Subsequently, the other aircraft was identified as a Piper PA-28-151 Cherokee aircraft, registered VH-LMY. The pilot of the Cherokee had completed a number of night circuits at Bankstown and reported that he was taxiing on runway 11 following a full stop landing.

At the time of the incident, Bankstown Airport was operating as a Common Traffic Advisory Frequency (R) (CTAF – radio required to be carried and used).

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau reviewed the recorded frequency channels for the Bankstown CTAF (R). The recordings indicated that the pilot of the Chieftain had broadcast his intentions on the Bankstown CTAF (R) during the approach. In addition, transmissions from other traffic and the Bankstown Aerodrome Frequency Response Unit (ARFU) were recorded.

However, there were no recorded transmissions from the pilot of the Cherokee on the Bankstown CTAF (R).

THE AUSTRALIAN TRANSPORT SAFETY BUREAU

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) is an operationally independent multi-modal Bureau within the Australian Government Department of Transport and Regional Services. ATSB investigations are independent of regulatory, operator or other external bodies.

The ATSB is responsible for investigating accidents and other transport safety matters involving civil aviation, marine and rail operations in Australia that fall within Commonwealth jurisdiction, as well as participating in overseas investigations involving Australian registered aircraft and ships. A primary concern is the safety of commercial transport, with particular regard to fare-paying passenger operations. Accordingly, the ATSB also conducts investigations and studies of the transport system to identify underlying factors and trends that have the potential to adversely affect safety.

The ATSB performs its functions in accordance with the provisions of the *Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003* and, where applicable, relevant international agreements. The object of a safety investigation is to determine the circumstances in order to prevent other similar events. The results of these determinations form the basis for safety action, including recommendations where necessary. As with equivalent overseas organisations, the ATSB has no power to implement its recommendations.

It is not the object of an investigation to determine blame or liability. However, it should be recognised that an investigation report must include factual material of sufficient weight to support the analysis and findings. That material will at times contain information reflecting on the performance of individuals and organisations, and how their actions may have contributed to the outcomes of the matter under investigation. At all times the ATSB endeavours to balance the use of material that could imply adverse comment with the need to properly explain what happened, and why, in a fair and unbiased manner.

Central to the ATSB's investigation of transport safety matters is the early identification of safety issues in the transport environment. While the Bureau issues recommendations to regulatory authorities, industry, or other agencies in order to address safety issues, its preference is for organisations to make safety enhancements during the course of an investigation. The Bureau prefers to report positive safety action in its final reports rather than making formal recommendations. Recommendations may be issued in conjunction with ATSB reports or independently. A safety issue may lead to a number of similar recommendations, each issued to a different agency.

The ATSB does not have the resources to carry out a full cost-benefit analysis of each safety recommendation. The cost of a recommendation must be balanced against its benefits to safety, and transport safety involves the whole community. Such analysis is a matter for the body to which the recommendation is addressed (for example, the relevant regulatory authority in aviation, marine or rail in consultation with the industry).

FACTUAL INFORMATION

At approximately 2200 Eastern Daylight-saving Time on 15 December 2005, the pilot of a Piper PA-31-350 Chieftain aircraft, registered VH-HJS, was approaching Bankstown Airport to land on Runway 11. Following touchdown, the pilot of the Chieftain noticed another aircraft on the right side of the runway and took avoiding action by manoeuvring to the left, off the runway sealed surface and on to the grass, to prevent a collision. The pilot reported that the other aircraft appeared to have only a dim tail light on at the time.

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The pilot of the Cherokee reported that he had listened to the information from the aerodrome Automatic Terminal Information Service (ATIS) prior to commencing circuits. During the circuit training, he reported that he had made all the normal transmissions on the Bankstown CTAF (R), but did not hear any transmissions from other aircraft or the Bankstown ARFU. However, there were no recorded transmissions from the pilot of the Cherokee on the Bankstown CTAF (R).

The owner of the Cherokee reported that the aircraft radio equipment functioned correctly with no unserviceability reported and that the aircraft was equipped with functional lights, including navigation, anti-collision and strobe lights. The pilot of Cherokee reported that all lights were on at the time of the incident.

ATSB Comment

The investigation was unable to determine why the transmissions from the pilot of the Cherokee were not recorded on the Bankstown CTAF (R), but it is likely that that an inadvertent mis-selection of the radio was made at some time after the pilot listened to the Bankstown ATIS. The investigation was also unable to rationalise the difference in evidence from the pilots of each the aircraft regarding the aircraft lighting on the Cherokee.

Safety Action

As a result of this occurrence, the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) has advised the Australian Transport Safety Bureau that they intend to take the following actions:

CASA will consider whether that 'beep back' equipment should be mandated for all Common Air Traffic Advisory Frequency (CTAF) and CTAF (R) aerodromes and whether a full tower service when night circuit training is taking place should also be mandated, especially during *ab-initio* circuit training by solo students.