

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
198601427**

Piper PA 31-310 Navajo C

16 July 1986

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NOTE: All air safety occurrences reported to the ATSB are categorised and recorded. For a detailed explanation on Category definitions please refer to the ATSB website at www.atsb.gov.au.

Occurrence Number: 198601427
Location: Benalla VIC
Date: 16 July 1986
Highest Injury Level: Minor
Injuries:

Occurrence Type: Accident

Time: 1818

	Fatal	Serious	Minor	None
Crew	0	0	2	2
Ground	0	0	0	-
Passenger	0	0	2	0
Total	0	0	2	2

Aircraft Details: Piper PA 31-310 Navajo C
Registration: VH-UCK
Serial Number:
Operation Type: Private
 (Corporate/Executive)
Damage Level: Destroyed
Departure Point: Benalla VIC
Departure Time: 1818
Destination: Bankstown NSW

Approved for Release: January 12th 1987

Circumstances:

At the time of the attempted take-off, the night was dark, with overcast cloud conditions and light rain falling. Wind conditions were light and variable. The pilot reported that initial acceleration was normal, and the aircraft became airborne at about 95 knots. A positive rate of climb was established and the landing gear was selected up. The pilot subsequently advised that the speed then decayed to 90 knots. At this time there was nothing unusual in the engine noise and the controls felt normal. Shortly afterwards the propellers struck the ground 116 metres beyond the end of the runway. The aircraft then struck an embankment and passed through a fence before coming to rest 247 metres from the initial ground strike. Although wind conditions were light and variable when the engines were started, shortly after the accident the wind was moderate from the west/south-west. A detailed analysis conducted by the Bureau of Meteorology indicated that while the pilot was preparing for take-off, a cold front with winds in excess of 20 knots had probably passed over the aerodrome. As the pilot had conducted the take-off on runway 08, there was probably a substantial tailwind component. Conditions were also assessed as suitable for the development of microbursts, but the lack of recording instruments in the area prevented confirmation that this type of phenomenon had in fact occurred. The pilot had been deprived of the opportunity to observe changing wind conditions at the aerodrome. The wind direction indicator adjacent to the threshold of runway 08 was not lit, and the illuminated wind direction indicator was not visible from the point where the aircraft was lined up for take-off.