

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
198800131**

Cessna 182P

11 September 1988

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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.

This accident was not subject to an on scene investigation.

Occurrence Number: 198800131 **Occurrence Type:** Accident
Location: 15 km North Esperance WA
Date: 11 September 1988 **Time:** 1745
Highest Injury Level: Nil
Injuries:

| | Fatal | Serious | Minor | None |
|--------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Crew | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Ground | 0 | 0 | 0 | - |
| Passenger | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

Aircraft Details: Cessna 182P
Registration: VH-RLW
Serial Number: 18262232
Operation Type: Private
Damage Level: Substantial
Departure Point: Lake King WA
Departure Time: 1706
Destination: Esperance WA

Approved for Release: November 16th 1988

Circumstances:

The pilot was operating a NOSAR NO DETAILS flight and he did not establish the time of last light at Esperance prior to departure from Lake King. In flight the pilot's only navigation was to check that he passed over known features whilst enroute. At a point approximately half way into the 50 minute flight the pilot became concerned about the failing light and he increased power in an attempt to reduce the remaining time interval to his destination. When the aircraft was approximately 15 km short of Esperance the pilot who was unsure of his exact position decided to land in a paddock rather than continue with the flight. The pilot carried out an Authorised Landing Area (ALA) inspection under the constraints of reducing time and light and he did not observe any obstructions other than some trees near the approach end of the paddock. Because of the trees the aircraft touched down well into the paddock and the pilot was unable to avoid colliding with a fence and water trough which he had not seen prior to landing. The collision occurred approximately 30 minutes prior to last light. The light was poor due to an extensive cloud cover. Esperance airfield was fitted with a Pilot Activated Lighting (PAL) system but the pilot who was aware that the system was there did not know the frequency needed to operate it. The pilot did not seek help from Flight Service prior to his precautionary landing.

Significant Factors:

The following factors were considered relevant to the development of the accident

1. The pilot did not adequately prepare for the flight prior to departure from Lake King. He should have made himself aware of the time of last light at Esperance he should have prepared a better navigation plan and he should have obtained the frequency for the PAL system at Esperance.

2. The pilot's in-flight procedures were inadequate in that he should have taken the opportunity to seek help from Flight Service or to carry out a landing in a suitable field when he first became aware that a problem with failing light existed. At that point in time there was sufficient time and light for the pilot to adequately inspect any possible ALA.

3. There is a possibility that the pilot continued flying in conditions of failing light in an attempt to reach his destination regardless of the possible consequences.