

Aviation Safety Investigation Report
199000070

Cessna 172

13 January 1990

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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: 199000070

Occurrence Type: Accident

Location: Braeside Station WA

Date: 13 January 1990

Time: 1000

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 172

Registration: VH-FRG

Serial Number: 17251012

Operation Type: Private

Damage Level: Substantial

Departure Point: Braeside Station WA

Departure Time: 700

Destination: Braeside Station WA

Approved for Release: 26th April 1990

Circumstances:

Prior to landing the pilot intended to carry out an inspection of the flight strip for possible obstructions. The inspection was to be performed at 500 feet above ground level, with ten degrees of flap selected. During the inspection the aircraft suddenly began to "sink" rapidly. Thinking the engine had suffered a loss of power, the pilot selected full throttle and lowered full flap in preparation for an emergency landing. Although the engine accelerated to full power, the aircraft did not respond to other control inputs and it continued to descend until it was less than 30 feet above the ground. By the time the pilot had regained full control of the aircraft, it was on a collision course with the roof of a large building. The left main and nosewheel were torn off, and sheets of roofing iron were left hanging from the right mainwheel and left wing. The pilot was able to maintain control and manoeuvred the aircraft for a landing on the flight strip, using a windrow on the side of the strip to support the fuselage in place of the missing mainwheel. The pilot's description of the sequence of events and the lack of suitable terrain which could cause a significant down-draft, indicated that the aircraft probably stalled whilst the pilot was concentrating on the airstrip inspection. The pilot's inexperience caused him to mis-identify the cause of the "sink" and he used an incorrect stall recovery technique.

Significant Factors:

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

1. Pilot relatively inexperienced.
2. Possible channelized attention as the pilot concentrated on the inspection.
3. The pilot probably failed to ensure that sufficient airspeed was maintained to prevent a stall.

4. Improper recovery actions.