

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report  
198600154**

**Beech C23**

**22 December 1986**

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Investigations commenced on or before 30 June 2003, including the publication of reports as a result of those investigations, are authorised by the CEO of the Bureau in accordance with Part 2A of the Air Navigation Act 1920.

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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](http://www.atsb.gov.au).**

**Occurrence Number:** 198600154  
**Location:** 1km South-west of Big Bell WA  
**Date:** 22 December 1986  
**Highest Injury Level:** Nil  
**Injuries:**

**Occurrence Type:** Accident  
**Time:** 745

	Fatal	Serious	Minor	None
Crew	0	0	1	1
Ground	0	0	0	-
Passenger	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

**Aircraft Details:** Beech C23  
**Registration:** VH-SHP  
**Serial Number:**  
**Operation Type:** Private-Survey  
**Damage Level:** Destroyed  
**Departure Point:** Coodardy Station, 8km  
North of Big Bell WA  
**Departure Time:** 0745  
**Destination:** Coodardy Station WA

**Approved for Release:** May 13th 1987

**Circumstances:**

The pilot was carrying out a check of the station windmills prior to commencing mustering operations. About 15 minutes after DEPARTURE he reported that an acrid smelling gas entered the cabin. He turned off the radios, the master switch and closed the cabin air vent and diverted to the nearest suitable strip. Enroute the acrid smell intensified and as the pilot was having trouble breathing he decided to land the aircraft in a nearby clearing. The throttle was closed in an endeavour to reduce the fumes but reapplied when this was not successful. However, the engine did not respond and the aircraft was landed short of the cleared area. During the landing roll the aircraft collided with trees. Following the last engine start the starter relay contacts remained closed due to internal corrosion, this resulted in the motor continuing to operate. The continuous operation of the starter produced enough heat to melt the non-standard engine earth strap at the attachment point to the firewall. Earth was then made through the tachometer cable and magneto switch leads, which overheated and burnt causing the magnetos to earth and the engine to subsequently fail.