

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
199802796**

**Piper Aircraft Corp
Chieftain**

28 April 1998

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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: 199802796 **Occurrence Type:** Incident
Location: Norfolk Island, Aerodrome
State: NSW **Inv Category:** 4
Date: Tuesday 28 April 1998
Time: 0230 hours **Time Zone** UTC
Highest Injury Level: None

Aircraft Manufacturer: Piper Aircraft Corp
Aircraft Model: PA-31-350
Aircraft Registration: VH-SVN **Serial Number:** 31-7752097
Type of Operation: Air Transport Domestic Low Capacity Passenger
Scheduled
Damage to Aircraft: Nil
Departure Point: Lord Howe Island NSW
Departure Time: 0859 UTC
Destination: Norfolk Island

Crew Details:

Role	Class of Licence	Hours on Type	Hours Total
Pilot-In-Command		794.0	2177

Approved for Release: Wednesday, December 2, 1998

Prior to the aircraft departing Lord Howe Island, the Terminal Area Forecast (TAF) for Norfolk Island did not require the pilot in command to arrive with fuel for holding or for diversion to an alternate airfield. During the course of the flight, the weather at Norfolk Island deteriorated. The TAF was initially amended to require 30 minutes holding and later amended to require 60 minutes of holding fuel. The pilot advised that he became aware of the deteriorating weather at his destination only after he had passed the point of no return (PNR).

When the aircraft arrived in the Norfolk Island circuit area, the pilot assessed the conditions as unsuitable to land and commenced holding at low level over the water, but within visual range of the island. Approximately 45 minutes later, the weather conditions improved sufficiently for the pilot to make a visual approach and landing. The aircraft landed with required fuel reserves.

Investigation of this incident did not reveal any deficiencies in the conduct of this flight. The airline has advised that as a result of this incident, they have changed their fuel policy to require the carriage of additional fuel where possible.

