

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report  
199703495**

**Piper Aircraft Corp  
Seneca**

**24 October 1997**

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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:** 199703495                      **Occurrence Type:** Accident  
**Location:** Hopetoun, Aerodrome  
**State:** VIC                                              **Inv Category:** 4  
**Date:** Friday 24 October 1997  
**Time:** 1025 hours                                      **Time Zone** EST  
**Highest Injury Level:** None

**Aircraft Manufacturer:** Piper Aircraft Corp  
**Aircraft Model:** PA-34-200T  
**Aircraft Registration:** VH-COP                      **Serial Number:** 34-7570166  
**Type of Operation:** Charter      Passenger  
**Damage to Aircraft:** Substantial  
**Departure Point:** Mildura Vic.  
**Departure Time:** 0946 EST  
**Destination:** Hopetoun Vic.

**Crew Details:**

<u>Role</u>	<u>Class of Licence</u>	<u>Hours on</u>	
		<u>Type</u>	<u>Hours Total</u>
Pilot-In-Command	Commercial	1500.0	5650

**Approved for Release:** Friday, November 21, 1997

The pilot of the Piper Seneca advised that after a normal approach and landing at Hopetoun Vic he sensed that the nose landing gear was retracting. He stated that he recycled the landing gear lever to ensure that the gear was down but the nose continued to lower as the nose landing gear collapsed. Concurrent with this the right main gear also retracted and the aircraft settled just off the strip. The pilot and his three passengers were able to evacuate successfully. Shortly after the accident the pilot commented that he had three greens on approach, and that he was now aware that recycling the landing gear selector was not the optimum action that could have been taken.

The pilot later advised that he had been told that it was possible that the nose landing gear could have retracted due to being out of adjustment, and that the right main landing gear could have retracted as a consequence of the hydraulic pressure being generated by the collapsing nose landing gear. The pilot also stated that he and his front seat passenger were now sure that he had not recycled the landing gear selector during the accident sequence.

Discussion with maintenance organizations found that there has been various causes for Piper Seneca nose landing gear malfunctions, maladjustment being just one of the causes. However the landing gear system is such that the down locks need to be selected before they release.

A detailed examination of the aircraft will be undertaken after the aircraft has been recovered to a maintenance facility.

