

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
199602103**

**Piper Aircraft Corp
Tri-Pacer**

28 June 1996

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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 Executive Director 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.

The Bureau did not conduct an on scene investigation of this occurrence. The information presented below was obtained from information supplied to the Bureau.

Occurrence Number: 199602103 **Occurrence Type:** Accident
Location: Karratha Station
State: WA **Inv Category:** 4
Date: Friday 28 June 1996
Time: 0950 hours **Time Zone:** WST
Highest Injury Level: None

Aircraft Manufacturer: Piper Aircraft Corp
Aircraft Model: PA-22-150
Aircraft Registration: VH-DMH **Serial Number:** 22-6367
Type of Operation: Non-commercial Aerial Mustering
Damage to Aircraft: Substantial
Departure Point: Karratha Station WA
Departure Time: 0950 WST
Destination: Karratha Station WA

Crew Details:

Role	Class of Licence	Hours on Type	Hours Total
Pilot-In-Command	Private	527.0	1920

Approved for Release: Monday, August 5, 1996

It was reported that planned mustering and other activities had been significantly delayed by poor weather and there was pressure to complete the task. The pilot did not sleep well on the night prior to the accident because of his concern about progress.

On the day of the accident the station strip was assessed as unsuitable for aircraft operations due to its soft surface. As a last resort, arrangements were made to fly the aircraft from an access road. A straight section of the road, 350 m long, was selected. There was a cattle grid, with guide-posts, at the end of the section. The pilot estimated there was sufficient distance available to become safely airborne.

During the takeoff the pilot experienced control difficulties caused by vehicle ruts in the road surface. The aircraft veered to the left and the left main wheel entered a soft area. The aircraft's acceleration was retarded but, as there was insufficient room to stop safely, the pilot continued with the takeoff. Immediately after lift-off there was a loud bang. The pilot thought the tail wheel had struck one of the guide-posts. Although the aircraft appeared to be operating normally, he elected to complete an immediate landing on a serviceable airstrip about a kilometre away. During the landing roll the left main landing gear collapsed as a result of damage caused by the collision with the post.

