

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
199501082**

**Cessna Aircraft Company
Skyhawk**

06 April 1995

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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:	199501082	Occurrence Type:	Incident
Location:	Devonport		
State:	TAS	Inv Category:	4
Date:	Thursday 06 April 1995		
Time:	1510 hours	Time Zone	EST
Highest Injury Level:	None		

Aircraft Manufacturer:	Cessna Aircraft Company		
Aircraft Model:	172N		
Aircraft Registration:	VH-NIT	Serial Number:	17271823
Type of Operation:	Commercial	Other	
Damage to Aircraft:	Nil		
Departure Point:	Devonport TAS		
Departure Time:			
Destination:	Devonport TAS		

Approved for Release: Friday, December 22, 1995

The purpose of the flight was to conduct an instrument rating renewal which included an instrument approach to Devonport. As the aircraft broke clear of cloud, the pilots became concerned that the aircraft was considerably lower than expected. Flight instrument indications appeared normal, both during and after the flight. Subsequently, the supervising pilot queried the Melbourne Regional Briefing Office (RBO) regarding the accuracy of the Automatic Terminal Information Service (ATIS) broadcast, on which the instrument approach had been conducted.

The pilot believed that the QNH was in error by approximately 12 hectopascals (hPa), resulting in the aircraft being approximately 360 ft lower than expected, and the wind was from the opposite direction.

Checks by the RBO indicated that the Bureau of Meteorology had not issued a current Devonport aerodrome Meteorological Report (METAR). This was due to the report message generated by the automatic weather station at Devonport being rejected by the Bureau of Meteorology computer.

The relevant air traffic service (ATS) officer had unknowingly broadcast an invalid Devonport METAR stored within ATS computer systems. Internal investigations by ATS revealed that as a result of a software problem, and the absence of a current Devonport METAR, the previous issue (24 hours old) had been retained and broadcast in error. Had a new, valid METAR been received it would have over-written the older, invalid message.

The QNH used for the approach was 1010 hPa in lieu of the actual 996 hPa, placing the aircraft approximately 420 ft lower than expected. The ATS computer system does not provide the origin time of the METAR. This was a fail unsafe deficiency.

The Civil Aviation Authority took immediate actions to prevent a recurrence by implementing revised procedures in the national communications centre.

The following factors contributed to the development of the occurrence:

- . The Devonport automatic weather station report was rejected by the Bureau of Meteorology computer.
- . ATS officer unknowingly broadcast an invalid metar.
- . ATS computer error.
- . ATS computer failure to provide message origin time for metar.
- . This resulted in the pilot being provided with an incorrect QNH.

