



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Office of Aviation Safety
Washington, D.C. 20594

January 29, 2022

Specialist's Factual Report

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL

CEN20FA075

A. ACCIDENT

Location: Chatham, Louisiana
Date: February 6, 2020
Time: 1413 central standard time (CST)¹
1913 coordinated universal time (UTC)
Airplane: Cessna 182, N60381

B. AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL SPECIALIST

Specialist Brian Soper
National Transportation Safety Board
Washington, DC

C. SUMMARY

On February 6, 2020, about 1413 central standard time, a Cessna 182 airplane, N60381, registered to an LLC, impacted the ground in Chatham, Louisiana. The commercial pilot and 2 passengers sustained fatal injuries. Marginal visual meteorological conditions prevailed in the area and an instrument flight rules (IFR) flight plan was filed. The personal flight was being conducted under the provisions of Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91. The flight originated at 1307 from the Hawkins Field Airport (HKS), Jackson, Mississippi, and was enroute to its intended destination of Shreveport Regional Airport (SHV), Shreveport, Louisiana.

D. DETAILS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The air traffic control (ATC) specialist did not travel in support of this investigation and all work was conducted from the home office. ATC services were provided by Monroe Airport Traffic Control Tower (MLU ATCT), audio data was provided by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and surveillance data was obtained from L3Harris, and both were used to produce the graphics and transcript associated with this report.

E. FACTUAL INFORMATION

1.0 Flight Track Surveillance Information

The airplane was equipped with a transponder and was transmitting a discrete beacon code of 1030 as assigned by ATC. The airplane was not Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B) equipped; however, radar surveillance captured the accident flight track.

¹ All times are in central standard time (CST) unless otherwise indicated.

1.1 OpsVue Data

OpsVue data is track data only. L3Harris' OpsVue uses NextGen² data which includes flight identification and location data for advisory purposes only. This NextGen data is a multi-sensor system that aggregates and georeferences FAA data sources including data from FAA ASDE-X³ and ASSC⁴ systems, FAA Terminal and En Route Radars, the FAA certified ADS-B network and flight plan data from the En Route Automation Modernization (ERAM)⁵ system. The reported altitude is derived from the reported pressure altitude, adjusted for the local pressure reported with the Rapid Update Cycle (RUC) data within the Continental United States (CONUS). Outside of the CONUS, only pressure altitude is reported. The accuracy of altitude data can vary, sometimes up to several hundred feet, however trend information (i.e., rates of climb and descent) is considered accurate and reliable.

The track data was of good quality and were used in producing the flight track graphics in this report⁶.

2.0 History of Flight

The following timeline was produced using the certified data provided by the FAA. Times are rounded to the nearest minute, and altitudes are indicated in feet above mean sea level (msl) unless otherwise indicated⁷.

1336 The pilot of N60381 first contacted the MLU ATCT High Radar – Tower Cab (HR) controller and reported he was at 6,000 feet. The HR controller acknowledged and provided the MLU altimeter.

² NextGen – Next Generation Air Transportation System – is the FAA's plan to modernize the National Airspace System (NAS). To achieve its NextGen goals, FAA is implementing new Performance-Based Navigation (PBN) routes and procedures that leverage emerging technologies and aircraft navigation capabilities.

³ ASDE-X – A surface movement radar that enables air traffic controllers to detect potential runway conflicts by providing detailed coverage of movement on runways and taxiways. ASDE-X collects data from a variety of sources to track vehicles and aircraft on the airport movement area and obtain identification information from aircraft transponders.

⁴ ASSC – Airport Surface Surveillance Capability – ASSC is a runway safety tool. With ASSC, both controllers and pilots with ADS-B In and cockpit displays see aircraft and ground vehicles on the airport surface, and on approach and departure paths within a few miles of the airport.

⁵ ERAM – En Route Automation Modernization – The NextGen system designed to replace the En Route Host and backup system previously utilized at Air Route Traffic Control Centers and allows for faster processing of route requests and in-flight route changes.

⁶ OpsVue source data is included in Attachment 1: Flight Track Data

⁷ A partial transcript of pilot-controller communications is included in Attachment 2: ATC Audio Transcript - Partial.

- 1350 The pilot of N60381 advised the HR controller that he was picking up light rime ice on the struts and edges of the windshield and requested and was approved to descend to 4,000 feet.
- 1352 The pilot of N60381 advised the HR controller that it seemed to have warmed up a bit and he had shed some ice. He further advised he would remain at 4,000 feet but asked if 2,000 feet may be possible if needed. The controller advised the lowest he would be able to approve would be 3,000 feet due to the MVA⁸ nearing Shreveport. The pilot acknowledged.
- 1355 The pilot of N60381 requested and was approved to descend to 3,000 feet.
- 1405 The pilot of N60381 advised the HR controller that he wanted to divert to Ruston [Ruston Regional Airport (RSN), Ruston, Louisiana] to get some ice off the airplane. The HR controller acknowledged and instructed the pilot to advise when he had the HR weather and asked what type of approach he was requesting.
- 1407 The pilot of N60381 advised the HR controller that he would like the RNAV approach to runway (RWY) 36, and that he had the RSN weather and NOTAMs⁹.
- The HR controller cleared N60381 direct to RUKOW, instructed the pilot to cross RUKOW¹⁰ at or above 2,000 feet and cleared him for the RNAV RWY 36 approach to RSN. The pilot acknowledged.
- 1411 The HR controller broadcasted a low altitude alert (LA)¹¹ to N60381 and attempted to advise the pilot that she had observed him at 1,000 feet and that he should be at 2,000 feet and to climb immediately. There was no response from the pilot

There were no further recorded transmissions from N60381.

⁸ MVA - Minimum Vectoring Altitude - The lowest msl altitude at which an IFR aircraft will be vectored by a radar controller, except as otherwise authorized for radar approaches, departures, and missed approaches.

⁹ NOTAM - Notice to Airman. A notice containing information concerning the establishment, condition or change in any component of the NAS which timely knowledge is essential to personnel concerned with flight operations.

¹⁰ RUKOW is the initial approach fix (IAF) for the RNAV RWY 36 approach to RSN.

¹¹ LA - Low Altitude Alert. An automated function of the installed radar system at MLU ATCT that alerts the controller when a Mode C transponder equipped aircraft on an IFR flight plan is below a predetermined minimum safe altitude. Both aural and visual alerts are provided.

3.0 Flight Track Graphics



Figure 1. Overview of accident flight track overlaid on satellite imagery.

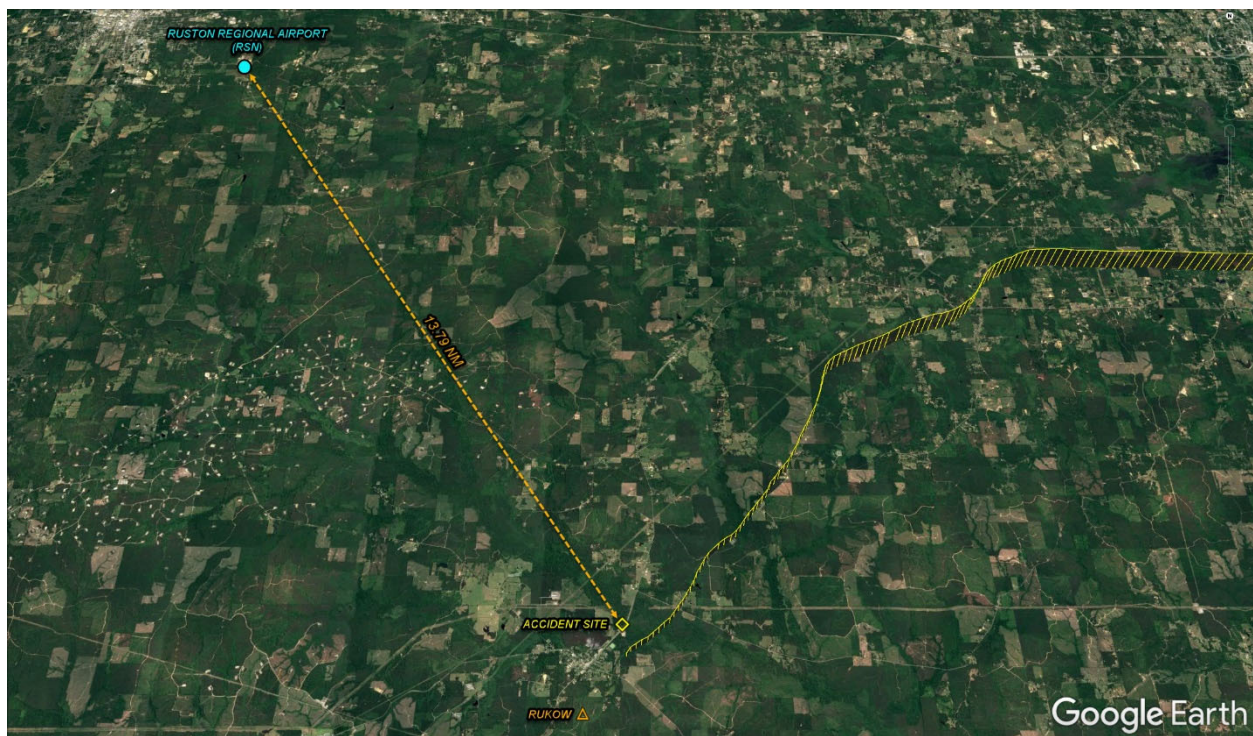


Figure 2. Final segment of accident flight track overlaid on satellite imagery (profile view).

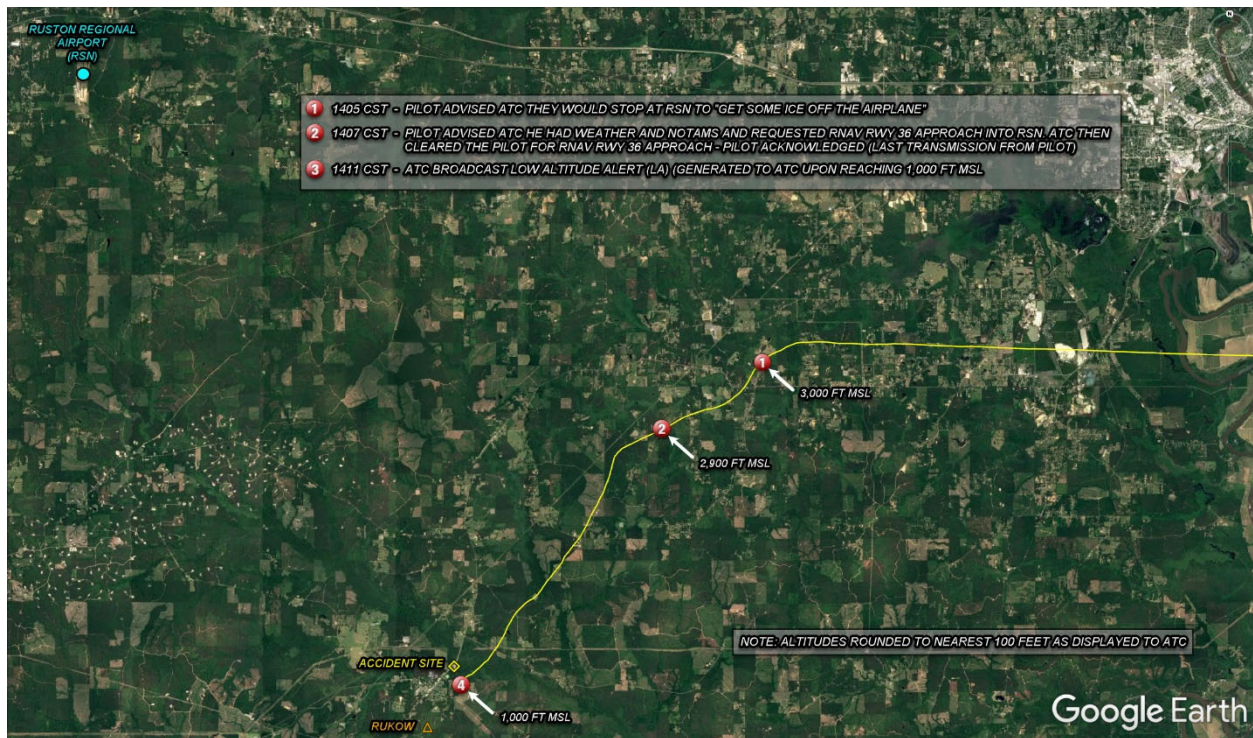


Figure 3. Final segment of accident flight track overlaid on satellite imagery - with time, altitude, ground speed, and heading information indicated.

F. LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Flight Track Data
- Attachment 2: ATC Audio Transcript - Partial
- Attachment 3: Flight Track Graphics
- Attachment 4: ATC Audio - High Radar-Tower Cab Controller

Submitted by:

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