

National Transportation Safety Board

Office of Aviation Safety

Washington, DC 20594



WPR20LA319

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL

Specialist's Factual Report

August 19, 2022

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A. ACCIDENT

Location: Santa Barbara, California
Date: September 27, 2020
Time: 0703 Pacific daylight time¹
1403 coordinated universal time²
Airplane: Cessna T182, N157RC

B. AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL SPECIALIST

Specialist Betty Koschig
National Transportation Safety Board

C. SUMMARY

On September 27, 2020, at 0703, a Cessna T182 airplane, N157RC, sustained substantial damage when it was involved in an accident near Santa Barbara, California. The pilot, the sole occupant, was fatally injured. The airplane was operated by the pilot as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)* Part 91 personal cross-country flight. The flight departed Santa Barbara Municipal Airport (SBA), Santa Barbara, California, for a cross-country flight to the Truckee-Tahoe Airport (TRK), Truckee, California.

D. DETAILS OF THE INVESTIGATION

Air traffic control (ATC) services were provided by Santa Barbara Municipal Airport (SBA) airport traffic control tower (ATCT) located in Santa Barbara, CA. SBA was a combined control tower and approach control facility. The ATC specialist did not travel to SBA or conduct interviews in support of this accident investigation.

E. FACTUAL INFORMATION

1.0 History of Flight

The history of flight was compiled utilizing the data provided by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The source data included in this report are listed in section F of this report.

¹ All times are Pacific daylight time (PDT) unless otherwise noted.

² Coordinated universal time - an international time standard using four digits of a 24-hour clock in hours and minutes based on the time in Greenwich, England.

At the time of the accident ATC services were being provided by SBA departure control.

About 0701, the pilot of N157RC contacted SBA tower requesting departure instructions. The local controller issued the pilot³ the wind information and a takeoff clearance from runway 15 left (15L). The pilot acknowledged.

When N157RC was approximately 0.5 nautical mile (nm) off the departure end of runway 15L, and approximately 700 feet mean sea level (msl)⁴, the local controller instructed the pilot to contact departure control. The pilot acknowledged.

About 0702, the pilot contacted departure control. The departure controller established radar contact and instructed the pilot to turn right heading 255° and climb to 8,000 feet. The pilot acknowledged.

About 0703, radar contact was lost, and the departure controller attempted to contact the pilot. The pilot did not respond. The controller attempted several more times to contact the pilot. No further transmissions were received from the pilot.

Figure 1 is a screen capture⁵ that illustrates the flight path of N157RC from the time the local controller issued takeoff instructions until the last radar target was recorded. Pertinent flight information and pilot/controller communications are included in the white boxes.

³ All reference to "the pilot" refer to the pilot of N157RC unless otherwise noted.

⁴ All altitudes are in feet above mean sea level (msl) unless otherwise noted.

⁵ Screen captures of flight track information overlaid on geographic imagery from a commercial mapping software (Microsoft MapPoint).

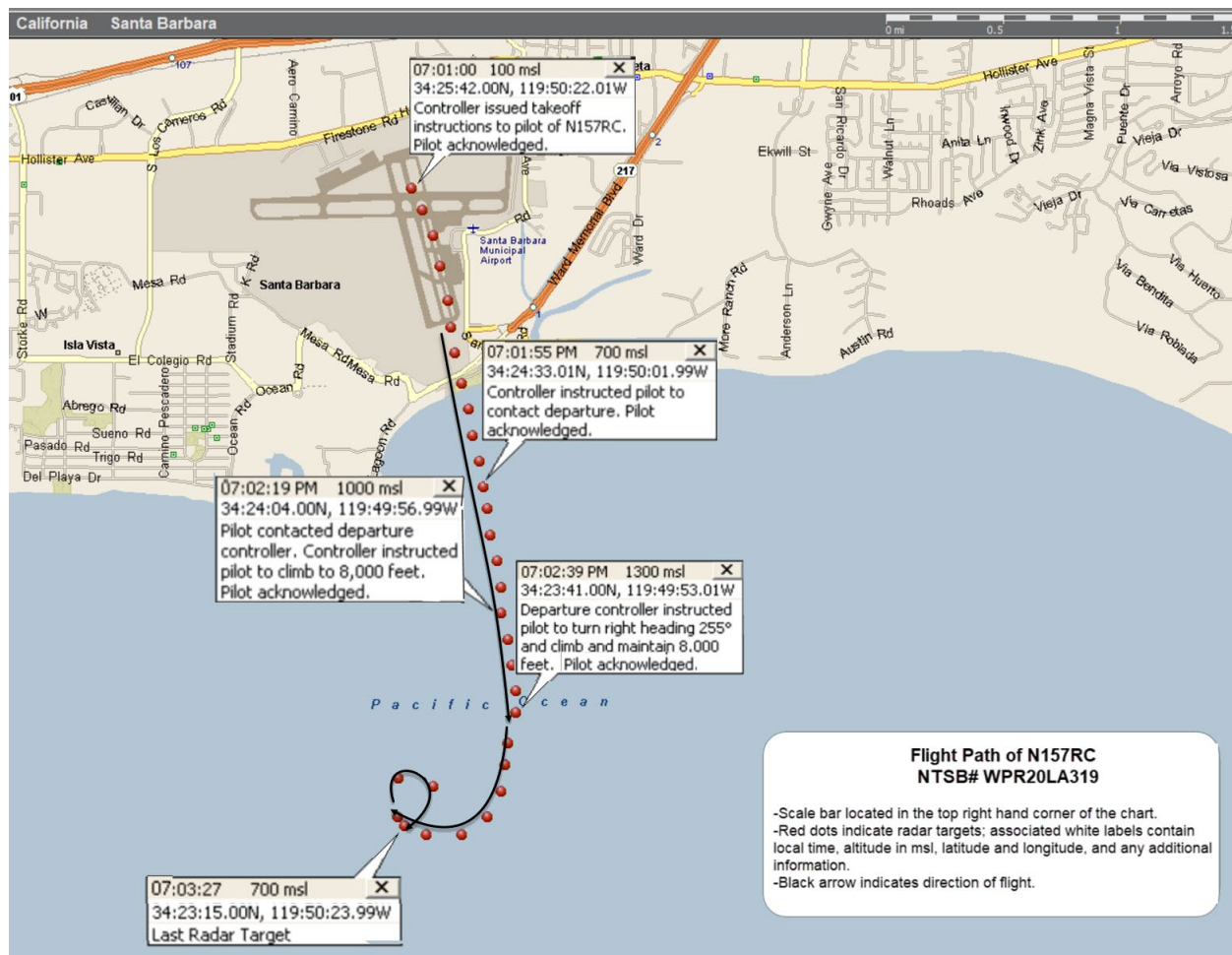


Figure 1. Screen capture illustrates N517RC's flight path and pertinent pilot/controller communications.

2.0 FAA Radar Data

FAA radar data was provided by SBA ATCT. The radar source data was obtained from the SBA airport surveillance radar (ASR-11) sensor.

3.0 Weather Information

An Automated Surface Observing System (ASOS)⁶ was located at Oxnard Airport (OXR) in Oxnard, CA, which was located about 33 miles east-southeast of the accident location at an elevation of 45 feet and had a magnetic variation of about 12° east. Though not the closest coastal observation point with a ceilometer, it was the

⁶ The ASOS systems serves as the nation's primary surface weather observing network. The ASOS units are operated and controlled cooperatively in the United States by the National Weather Service, FAA, and Department of Defense.

closest that provided any data on the accident day. The aviation routine weather report (METAR)⁷ current at the time of the accident was:

[0651 PDT] METAR KOXR 271351Z 06004KT 7SM OVC014 19/17 A2987 RMK
AO2 SLP114 T01890167=

The METAR in plain language reads:

At 0651 PDT, the OXR ASOS reported a wind from 060° at 4 knots, visibility of 7 statute miles, ceiling overcast at 1,400 feet above ground level, temperature of 19° Celsius (C) and a dew point temperature of 17°C, altimeter setting of 29.87 inches of mercury; remarks: automated station with a precipitation discriminator, sea level pressure of 1011.4 hectopascals (hPa), temperature of 18.9°C and a dew point temperature of 16.7°C.

F. LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - FAA Certified ATC Radar Data

Attachment 2 - Audio Recording of SBA Tower Local Control (LC) Position

Attachment 3 - Audio Recording of SBA ELCAP (EC) Departure Control Position

Attachment 4 - Aircraft Accident Package

Submitted by:

Betty Koschig
Senior Air Traffic Control Investigator

⁷ METAR is an observation of current surface weather reported in a standard international format. METARs are issued hourly unless significant weather changes have occurred