



Ref: 7613

SOUTH AFRICAN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY

ACCIDENT REPORT – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Aircraft Registration	ZS-NVF	Date of Accident	4 January 2003	Time of Accident	1330Z
Type of Aircraft	PIPER PA 25-235		Type of Operation	Banner Towing	
Pilot-in-command Licence Type	Commercial	Age	36	Licence Valid	Yes
Pilot-in-command Flying Experience	Total Flying Hours	933		Hours on Type	11.7
Last point of departure	Stellenbosch				
Next point of intended landing	Stellenbosch				
Location of the accident site with reference to easily defined geographical points (GPS readings if possible)					
On Hamilton Sports Field, Green Point, Cape Town.					
Meteorological Information	Wind 15 – 20 knots, gusting 30 knots with clear skies, were reported at the time of the accident.				
Number of people on board	1 + 0	No. of people injured	0	No. of people killed	0
Synopsis	<p>On 4 January 2003 at approximately 1100Z, after refuelling the aircraft to maximum capacity at FASH (Stellenbosch), the pilot departed to the Green Point area, towing a banner.</p> <p>While flying over the Camps Bay area at 300 ft AGL, in fine weather conditions, the aircraft went inverted due to turbulence but the pilot managed to up-right the aircraft and decided to return to FASH. Following the latter the engine started running rough, steadily lost power and eventually failed and a forced landing was executed on an open field, adjacent to the Hamilton Sports Field in Green Point Commune, near Cape Town. The pilot decided not to release the banner due to potential injuries to pupils on the ground.</p> <p>The pilot sustained serious injuries and the aircraft was extensively damaged.</p> <p>The pilot held a valid licence and a valid medical certificate but was not rated for banner towing.</p> <p>The aircraft was type accepted in South Africa and according to available documentation it was properly maintained. The engine was dismantled and inspected but apart from accident related damage, nothing abnormal, which could have caused the engine to loose power or to fail, were noticed.</p> <p>The aircraft was operated under Part 135 of the Civil Aviation Regulation of 1997, under the license of Cape West Aviation (Class iii Air Services Licence No. G495D). This facility was audited by the CAA on 13 November 2001. The AMO file at the CAA could not be located in order to confirm the CAA audit status.</p>				
Probable Cause(s)					
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Although fine weather conditions prevailed at the time of the accident, the wind was very strong and gusty. This will cause a considerable increase in the fuel consumption of the aircraft and can be considered as a highly probable cause to this accident. 2. In addition to this was the increase in fuel consumption when towing the banner, which would increase the drag significantly. 3. The pilot did not have a rating for banner towing. His inexperience in this regard could have contributed to miscalculations with regards to fuel consumption as well as manoeuvrability of the aircraft. 4. The pilot was flying the aircraft at 300 ft AGL to ensure proper visibility of the banner to people on the ground. The latter left the pilot with virtually no options to exercise when the engine failed. 					