



Aviation Investigation Preliminary Report

Location:	San Diego, CA	Accident Number:	WPR25FA169
Date & Time:	June 8, 2025, 12:30 Local	Registration:	N414BA
Aircraft:	Cessna 414	Injuries:	6 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Business		

On June 08, 2025, at 1230 Pacific daylight time, a Cessna 414A, N414BA, was substantially damaged when it was involved in an accident in San Diego, California. The pilot and five passengers were fatally injured. The airplane was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) Part 91 business flight.

The day before the accident, the pilot and passengers flew from Phoenix, Arizona, to San Diego. The accident flight was intended to return to Phoenix.

The exact radio communication times could not be confirmed for the accident flight. The pilot received an instrument flight rules (IFR) clearance and was issued the BRDR7 (Border 7) departure. The published BRDR7 Standard Instrument Departure (SID) with a takeoff from runway 27 consisted of a “climb on heading 278° until PYG [Poggi VORTAC] 19 DME, then left turn on heading 123° to intercept PGY VPRTAC R-260 and R-069 to BROWS INT.”

After departing from runway 27, the pilot made a radio communication to SOCAL departure that he was at 1,600 ft, and shortly thereafter, the controller instructed him to make a left, 180° turn. The airplane began a gradual turn, and after climbing to about 2,000 ft, it made a steep descent to 200 ft. The controller issued the pilot a low altitude alert and instructed him to climb to 4,000 ft immediately to which the pilot replied by repeating the instructions. The controller then asked if he needed any assistance and queried him as to the nature of the problem. The pilot stated that he was “struggling” to try to maintain the airplane on a heading and climb. In response, the controller told him of the closest airport that was one mile away and asked him if he could see it. The pilot responded that he did not see the airport and made a series of erratic maneuvers before making several mayday calls (see figure 1 below).

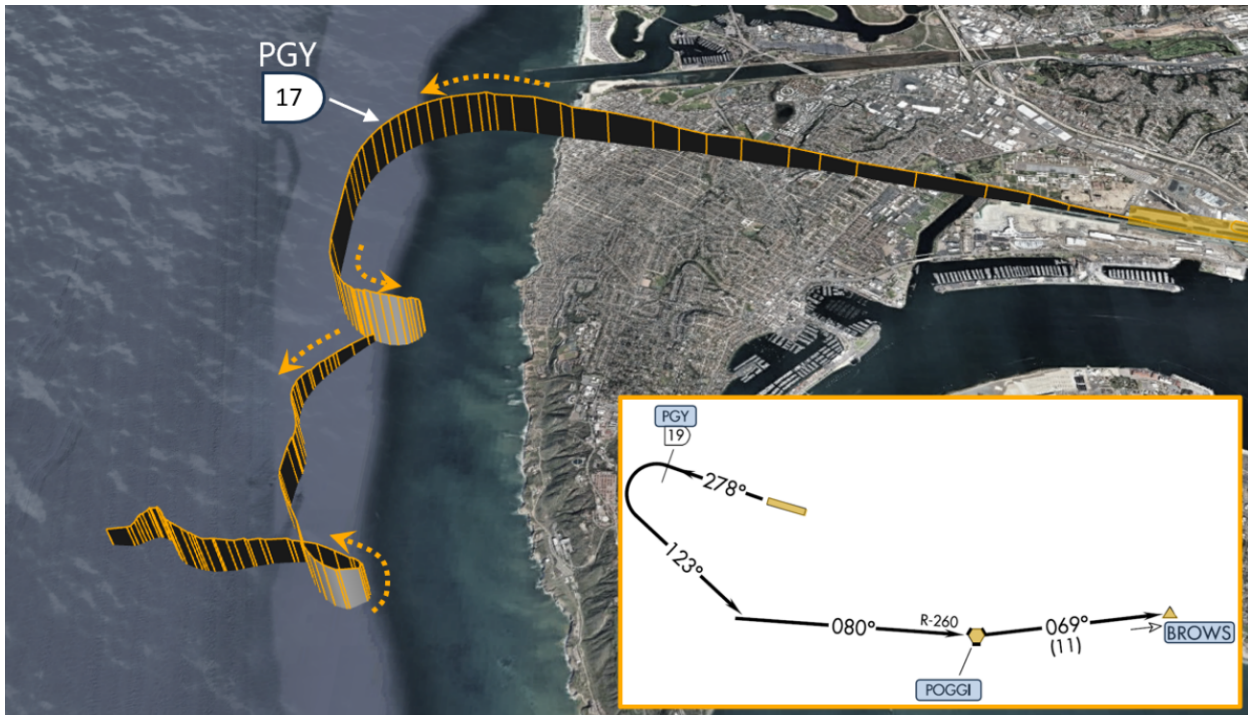


Figure 1: Airplane's flight path with the pictorial approach procedure

A video captured the airplane descending before climbing back into the cloud layer, where it subsequently disappeared from view (see figure 2 below).

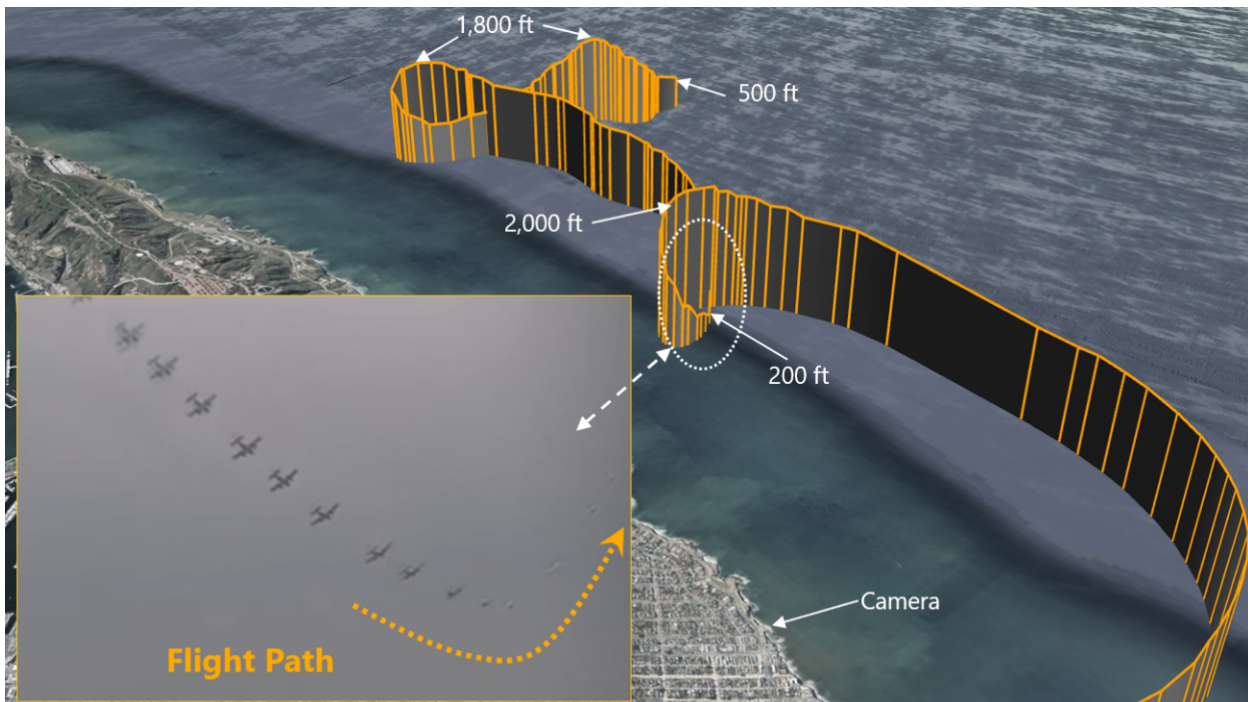


Figure 2: Flight path and composite video graphic showing the airplane climbing into the cloud layer

A police helicopter was ten miles east of the accident site when the flight crew received a request to search for any signs of an airplane impacting the water. In a post-accident interview, the helicopter pilot stated that he estimated the cloud bases at roughly 800 feet in numerous areas, with the highest layer near 1,600 ft (although a majority of the clouds were lower). Upon reaching the search area, he located an oil slick approximately two miles offshore.

The accident airplane's regular pilot, who was also a friend of the accident pilot, stated that he had flown about 50 hours with the accident pilot in the airplane. He stated that two days prior to the accident, the accident pilot flew solo up to Springerville, Arizona. The friend then boarded the airplane and acted as a safety pilot for the accident pilot as he conducted four approaches in simulated instrument meteorological conditions. He recalled that the pilot used a Garmin 430 and iPad with ForeFlight for navigation and was accustomed to hand-flying the airplane, which had no autopilot or glass cockpit. He noted that the pilot had expressed some nervousness about the busy southern California airspace, but appeared to be proficient during their review of the San Diego departure procedure.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Cessna	Registration:	N414BA
Model/Series:	414	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Amateur Built:			
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Designator Code:			

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	IMC	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KNZY, 14 ft msl	Observation Time:	11:52 Local
Distance from Accident Site:	4 Nautical Miles	Temperature/Dew Point:	18°C / 14°C
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	9 knots / None, 320°
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 1000 ft AGL	Visibility:	10 miles
Altimeter Setting:	29.99 inches Hg	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	IFR
Departure Point:	San Diego, CA	Destination:	Phoenix, AZ (PHX)

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	5 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	6 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	32.695711,-117.28911 (est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Keliher, Zoe
Additional Participating Persons:	Roger Messick; Federal Aviation Administration; San Diego, CA
Investigation Class:	Class 3
Note:	