DELIBERATE DESCENT BELOW DH LED TO LEARJET FATAL

News / Business aviation

The crash of a **Learjet** 35A on a second ILS approach in IMC to Runway 6 at Freeport International Airport, Bahamas, on Nov. 9, 2014, was caused by “the poor decision making of the crew in initiating and continuing a **descent** in IMC below the authorized altitude without visual contact with the runway environment,” according to a newly released final report from the Bahama's Air Accident Investigation & Prevention Unit (AAIPU).

The crew broke off their first instrument approach due to poor visibility at the decision height. Once cleared for the second ILS approach, the aircraft descended below the **DH** while the pilots attempted to visually find the runway until hitting a crane and crashing.

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The AAIPU report lists contributing factors as bad weather; improper planning for the approach; insufficient situational awareness; inadequate CRM; and the crew's deliberate disabling of the Taws. According to the CVRtranscript, one of the crewmembers said, “Ah shut up” after which the Taws alerts of “too low, terrain and pull up” ceased. The AAIPU also noted that the “need for the VIPs on board to get to Freeport that evening was a strong motivator and or psychological factor acting on the crew.”

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