



Australian Government

Australian Transport Safety Bureau

Runway incursion between a Cessna 206, VH-LHX and a Cessna 210, VH-HGZ

Gove Airport, Northern Territory, 13 August 2013

ATSB Transport Safety Report
Aviation Occurrence Investigation
AO-2013-162
Final – 10 December 2013

Released in accordance with section 25 of the *Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003*

Publishing information

Published by: Australian Transport Safety Bureau
Postal address: PO Box 967, Civic Square ACT 2608
Office: 62 Northbourne Avenue Canberra, Australian Capital Territory 2601
Telephone: 1800 020 616, from overseas +61 2 6257 4150 (24 hours)
Accident and incident notification: 1800 011 034 (24 hours)
Facsimile: 02 6247 3117, from overseas +61 2 6247 3117
Email: atsbinfo@atsb.gov.au
Internet: www.atsb.gov.au

© Commonwealth of Australia 2013



Ownership of intellectual property rights in this publication

Unless otherwise noted, copyright (and any other intellectual property rights, if any) in this publication is owned by the Commonwealth of Australia.

Creative Commons licence

With the exception of the Coat of Arms, ATSB logo, and photos and graphics in which a third party holds copyright, this publication is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia licence.

Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia Licence is a standard form license agreement that allows you to copy, distribute, transmit and adapt this publication provided that you attribute the work.

The ATSB's preference is that you attribute this publication (and any material sourced from it) using the following wording: *Source:* Australian Transport Safety Bureau

Copyright in material obtained from other agencies, private individuals or organisations, belongs to those agencies, individuals or organisations. Where you want to use their material you will need to contact them directly.

Addendum

Page	Change	Date

Runway incursion between a Cessna 206, VH-LHX and a Cessna 210, VH-HGZ

What happened

On 13 August 2013, the pilot of a Cessna 210 aircraft, registered VH-HGZ (HGZ), was conducting a charter flight from Groote Eylandt to Gove Airport, Northern Territory. Prior to commencing the descent into Gove, the pilot broadcast an inbound call on the common traffic advisory frequency (CTAF).¹ Soon after, the pilot reported broadcasting a call advising he was at 10 NM, inbound, with the intention of joining the base leg of the circuit for runway 31.

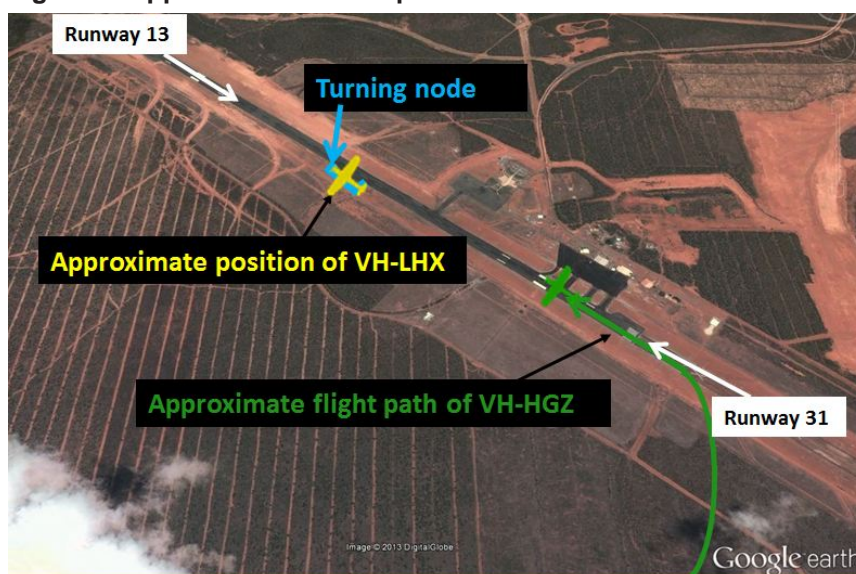
At about the same time, the pilot of a Cessna 206 aircraft, registered VH-LHX (LHX), broadcast on the CTAF advising that he was taxiing at Gove. Shortly after, the pilot broadcast that he was entering and backtracking runway 13. The pilot of LHX elected to use runway 13 as the wind direction was 110° at 7 kt.

The pilot of HGZ joined the base leg for runway 31 and made a broadcast. The pilot stated that he was aware of LHX taxiing.

The pilot of LHX contacted the pilot of HGZ and requested confirmation that he was approaching runway 31. The pilot of HGZ responded that he was at Gove, turning final for runway 31. The pilot of LHX then immediately broadcast that he was on the runway and would be lining up for runway 13. No response was received. The pilot of LHX then broadcast his intention to hold at the turning node, which was located mid-way along the runway, but within the confines of the flight strip (Figure 1). The pilot of HGZ responded and advised that he had LHX sighted and was on final approach for runway 31.

HGZ landed on runway 31 and vacated the runway. At the time, LHX was positioned at the turning node, but the runway was still occupied. LHX subsequently departed from runway 13.

Figure 1: Approximate aircraft positions



Source: Google earth

¹ The ATSB obtained recordings of the CTAF transmissions and verified the broadcasts made by the pilots of LHX and HGZ.

Pilot comments (VH-HGZ)

The pilot reported that he did not believe there was a risk of collision with LHX as that aircraft was positioned to the side of the runway. Furthermore, he stated that, in hindsight, he should have joined the circuit at a mid-field crosswind position for runway 31 to ensure adequate separation with LHX.

Pilot comments (VH-LHX)

The pilot of LHX provided the following comments regarding the incident:

- he elected to hold at the turning node to reduce the risk of collision and broadcast his intention to do so
- he was of the impression that the pilot of HGZ was going to continue with his approach as he had broadcast a call stating that he had LHX sighted and was on final.

Safety action

Whether or not the ATSB identifies safety issues in the course of an investigation, relevant organisations may proactively initiate safety action in order to reduce their safety risk. The ATSB has been advised of the following proactive safety action in response to this occurrence.

Operator of VH-LHX

As a result of this occurrence, the operator of LHX has advised the ATSB that they are taking the following safety actions:

- A number of pilot communications have been issued to raise awareness of the potential threats of operations around non-towered aerodromes and separation breakdown in uncontrolled airspace in general. These documents emphasise the importance of an effective lookout and the use of correct procedures.
- All pilots will continue to be reminded about the threats related to operations in CTAF areas and technique to minimise a breakdown in separation.

Safety message

The ATSB SafetyWatch highlights the broad safety concerns that come out of our investigation findings and from the occurrence data reported to us by industry. One of the safety concerns is safety around non-towered aerodromes. This report is available on the ATSB website at: www.atsb.gov.au/safetywatch/safety-around-aeros.aspx



An ATSB research report into safety occurrences at non-towered aerodromes determined that runway incursions accounted for about 7 per cent of the 501 conflicts identified between 2003 and 2008. The report further stated that the risk of runway incursions could be minimised by pilots through good communication. The report is available at [www.atsb.gov.au/publications/2008/ar_2008_044\(1\).apsx](http://www.atsb.gov.au/publications/2008/ar_2008_044(1).apsx)

This incident highlights the importance of pilots not only being aware of their surroundings and of nearby aircraft, but also the need to maintain sufficient separation.

General details

Occurrence details

Date and time:	13 August 2013 – 1450 CST	
Occurrence category:	Incident	
Primary occurrence type:	Airspace related event	
Location:	Gove Airport, Northern Territory	
	Latitude: 12° 16.17' S	Longitude: 136° 49.10' E

Aircraft details: VH-LHX

Manufacturer and model:	Cessna Aircraft Company 206	
Registration:	VH-LHX	
Serial number:	U20603555	
Type of operation:	Charter - passenger	
Persons on board:	Crew – 1	Passengers – 2
Injuries:	Crew – Nil	Passengers – Nil
Damage:	Nil	

Aircraft details: VH-HGZ

Manufacturer and model:	Cessna Aircraft Company 210L	
Registration:	VH-HGZ	
Serial number:	21060430	
Type of operation:	Charter - passenger	
Persons on board:	Crew – 1	Passengers – 2
Injuries:	Crew – Nil	Passengers – Nil
Damage:	Nil	

About the ATSB

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) is an independent Commonwealth Government statutory agency. The ATSB is governed by a Commission and is entirely separate from transport regulators, policy makers and service providers. The ATSB's function is to improve safety and public confidence in the aviation, marine and rail modes of transport through excellence in: independent investigation of transport accidents and other safety occurrences; safety data recording, analysis and research; and fostering safety awareness, knowledge and action.

The ATSB is responsible for investigating accidents and other transport safety matters involving civil aviation, marine and rail operations in Australia that fall within Commonwealth jurisdiction, as well as participating in overseas investigations involving Australian registered aircraft and ships. A primary concern is the safety of commercial transport, with particular regard to fare-paying passenger operations.

The ATSB performs its functions in accordance with the provisions of the *Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003* and Regulations and, where applicable, relevant international agreements.

The object of a safety investigation is to identify and reduce safety-related risk. ATSB investigations determine and communicate the safety factors related to the transport safety matter being investigated.

It is not a function of the ATSB to apportion blame or determine liability. At the same time, an investigation report must include factual material of sufficient weight to support the analysis and findings. At all times the ATSB endeavours to balance the use of material that could imply adverse comment with the need to properly explain what happened, and why, in a fair and unbiased manner.

About this report

Decisions regarding whether to conduct an investigation, and the scope of an investigation, are based on many factors, including the level of safety benefit likely to be obtained from an investigation. For this occurrence, a limited-scope, fact-gathering investigation was conducted in order to produce a short summary report, and allow for greater industry awareness of potential safety issues and possible safety actions.