



## MEMORANDUM for RECORD

**Ralph E. Hicks**  
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**Eastern Region Aviation**

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**Date: July 1, 2021**  
**FAA Inspector Statement: Bradley Gottschalk, Memphis TN FSDO**  
**NTSB Accident Number: ERA21LA273 – Woodland, Tennessee**

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The following FAA inspector statement was provided via email to the NTSB IIB on 7/1/2021 (in blue):

The accident involving N818TF, a Piper Cherokee 180, occurred at approximately 2148z (1648 Local) on June 28, 2021. The accident occurred at location Latitude 35.590358 North/Longitude 89.100681 West. Located approximately 10.5 miles west of McKellar Sipes Regional Airport (MKL) near Jackson, TN. The aircraft sustained substantial damage with minor injuries to the sole occupant.

N818TF was being piloted by a student pilot with a total of 28 hours of accumulative flight instruction. Eight of the 28 total hours were conducted as solo training. The student pilot was on an authorized solo training flight in accordance with a Part 61 training curriculum. A review of the pilots logbook and student records provided by the flight school indicated all pre-solo requirements authorizing the student pilot to operate the aircraft under solo training were met.

The student pilot departed Runway 20 at MKL to the west at 2055z (1555 Local) as indicated from the recorded audio takeoff clearance provided by the MKL tower manager. At 2147z (1647 Local) the student pilot advised the tower controller that he was experiencing low RPM's at full power. At 2148z (1648 Local) the student pilot advised the tower controller that he was not going to make the field and gave a position report. That was the last radio transmission the student pilot made to the MKL tower controller.

The aircraft came to rest in a heavily wooded area at an approximate 70 degree nose down attitude with the nose and left outboard wing leading edge making contact with the

ground. The aircraft attitude was being held suspended in the vegetation. Further inspection of the aircraft revealed impact damage to both wings, propeller, engine, firewall, and fuselage. All aircraft control surfaces and major components were accounted for at the scene. Inspection of the propeller indicated minimal rotation at the time of impact. A slight amount of fuel was seen dripping from between the filler neck and fuel cap of the left fuel tank. No post-impact fire occurred.

After securing the aircraft back onto the landing gear and out of the vegetation, an inspection of the fuel system was conducted. Both fuel tanks appeared to be intact. Approximately 15 gallons of 100LL was recovered from the left fuel tank. The right fuel tank appeared to have no trace of fuel. The power and mixture control were found in the full forward position. The fuel selector was found in the right tank position. The main fuel line going to the carburetor from the engine driven fuel pump contained only a trace amount of fuel. Indication of the Hobbs meter installed in the aircraft showed approximately one hour of time since the last recorded operation. It was stated by the student pilot during a post-accident interview, that he never switched the fuel selector from the right tank position during the entirety of the flight.