



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Clovis, New Mexico	Accident Number:	WPR23LA002
Date & Time:	October 2, 2022, 16:00 Local	Registration:	N987PS
Aircraft:	Piper PA 46-350P	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Loss of control in flight	Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Business		

Analysis

As the pilot approached the destination airport, the wind was reported as light and variable. He stated that as he flew the visual approach to runway 4 and prepared to land, he encountered a major gust of wind and elected to perform a go-around. The pilot reported that he applied full engine power, retracted the landing gear and flaps, and initiated a climb when the “stall shaker started shaking”. The pilot lowered the nose to prevent the airplane from stalling and initiated a gear-up landing to an open field adjacent to the runway.

The pilot reported encountering a gust of wind; however, the wind reported at the airport 4 minutes before the accident was from 180 ° at 11 knots. The wind reported about an hour after the accident was from 160° at 10 knots. Neither weather report indicated wind gusts or significant changes in wind direction. The calculated crosswind component at the time of the accident was about 7 knots, with a tailwind of about 8 knots.

Postaccident examination of the airplane revealed no preaccident mechanical failures or malfunctions with the airplane that would have precluded normal operation.

Given the pilot’s description of the go-around and the absence of a mechanical failure or malfunction, he likely retracted the flaps before establishing the required climb airspeed and positive rate of climb. The quartering tailwind would have contributed to the loss of expected airplane performance, resulting in an incipient stall and the subsequent gear-up landing.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

The pilot's failure to follow the go-around procedures by prematurely retracting the flaps and not establishing a proper go-around climb speed after attempting to land with a quartering tailwind, resulting in the airplane's inability to climb.

Findings

Aircraft	Airspeed - Not attained/maintained
Personnel issues	Aircraft control - Pilot
Personnel issues	Use of checklist - Pilot
Environmental issues	Tailwind - Effect on equipment

Factual Information

History of Flight

Approach-VFR go-around	Loss of control in flight (Defining event)
Approach	Attempted remediation/recovery
Approach-VFR go-around	Off-field or emergency landing

On October 2, 2022, about 1600 Mountain daylight time, a Piper PA-46-350P, N987PS, was substantially damaged when it was involved in an accident near Clovis, New Mexico. The pilot and passenger were not injured. The airplane was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91 personal flight.

The pilot reported that he encountered “a major wind gust” while on a visual approach to runway 4 at Clovis Regional Airport (CVN). In response, he aborted the approach, applied full engine power, and retracted the landing gear and flaps; however, the airplane did not have enough speed and power to maintain flight. The pilot subsequently felt the airplane buffet and lowered the nose. The pilot maneuvered the airplane and initiated a gear-up landing to an open field adjacent to runway 4. During the landing sequence, the right horizontal stabilizer impacted an airport sign, and the airplane came to rest upright. A postaccident fire ensued.

The automated weather observation station located on the airport reported that, about 4 minutes before the accident, the wind was from 180° at 11 knots. The same automated station reported that, about 56 minutes after the accident, the wind was from 160° at 10 knots. The calculated crosswind component at the time of the accident was about 7 knots, with a tailwind of about 8 knots.

Postaccident examination of the airplane revealed that the fuselage undercarriage, right horizontal stabilizer, and the right elevator were substantially damaged. A subsequent examination of the recovered wreckage revealed no preaccident mechanical failures or malfunctions with the airplane that would have precluded normal operation.

A review of the airplane’s Pilot Operating Handbook (POH), Section 4.33, “GO-AROUND,” states in part, “To initiate a go-around from a landing approach, the mixture should be set to full RICH, the propeller control should be a full INCREASE, and the throttle should be advanced to full power while the pitch attitude is increased to obtain the balked landing climb speed of 80 KIAS. Retract the landing gear and slowly retract the flaps when a positive climb is established. Allow the airplane to accelerate to the best angle of climb (81 KIAS) for obstacle clearance or to the best rate of climb speed (110 KIAS) if obstacles are not a factor.”

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	69, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	3-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	April 12, 2022
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	June 20, 2022
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 4946 hours (Total, all aircraft), 3323 hours (Total, this make and model), 4946 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft)		

Passenger Information

Certificate:		Age:	Female
Airplane Rating(s):		Seat Occupied:	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):		Restraint Used:	Lap only
Instrument Rating(s):		Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):		Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:		Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:			

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N987PS
Model/Series:	PA 46-350P	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1999	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	46-36225
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	6
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	August 18, 2022 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	4358 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	2936.8 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	C91A installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	TIO-540-AE2A
Registered Owner:	SEVEN S FARMS LLC	Rated Power:	350 Horsepower
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KCVN,4216 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	0 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	15:56 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	325°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 8000 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	11 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	None / None
Wind Direction:	180°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	30.22 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	27°C / 6°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Tucson, AZ (RYN)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Clovis, NM	Type of Clearance:	VFR,VFR flight following
Departure Time:	12:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	CLOVIS RGNL CVN	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	4215 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	04	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	7200 ft / 150 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Go around;Straight-in

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Fire:	On-ground
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	34.42659,-103.07758(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Gutierrez, Eric
Additional Participating Persons:	Robert A. Smith; Federal Aviation Administration; Lubbock , TX David Harsanyi; Lycoming Engines; Williamsport, PA John Hirsch; Piper Aircraft Inc.; Vero Beach , FL
Original Publish Date:	August 23, 2023
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 3
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=106042

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The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person” (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available [here](#).