



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Death Valley, California	Accident Number:	WPR24LA107
Date & Time:	March 9, 2024, 10:39 Local	Registration:	N78659
Aircraft:	Piper PA-11	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Loss of control on ground	Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot of the tailwheel equipped airplane reported that during the landing rollout and as the airplane slowed, rudder inputs became less effective. The airplane began to veer to the left, then departed the left side of the runway and ground looped. The airplane struck a runway sign located approximately 30 ft from the runway, and the fuselage sustained substantial damage. The pilot reported that there were no preaccident mechanical malfunctions or failures that would have precluded normal operation.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

The pilot’s failure to maintain directional control during the landing rollout, resulting in a ground loop and runway excursion.

Findings

Aircraft	Directional control - Not attained/maintained
Personnel issues	Aircraft control - Pilot

Factual Information

History of Flight

Landing	Loss of control on ground (Defining event)
----------------	--

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	68, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	4-point
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Sport pilot With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	May 20, 2019
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	June 17, 2023
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 206 hours (Total, all aircraft), 103 hours (Total, this make and model), 98 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 9 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 3 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N78659
Model/Series:	PA-11	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1947	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	11-1420
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	June 21, 2023 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1220 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	21 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	6116 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	C91 installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	C-85-12
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	85 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:	KDRA,3230 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	42 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	09:53 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	75°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	9 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/ None
Wind Direction:	120°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/ N/A
Altimeter Setting:	30.19 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	11°C / -13°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Inyokern, CA (KIYK)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	VFR
Destination:	Death Valley, CA	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	09:10 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	Furnace Creek L06	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	-210 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry;Rough
Runway Used:	33	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	3065 ft / 70 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Full stop;Traffic pattern

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	36.46,-116.88

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Blocher, Kristyn
Additional Participating Persons:	Jack Cline; Federal Aviation Administration; Las Vegas, NV
Original Publish Date:	May 29, 2024
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 4
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=193918

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

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](#).