



Aviation Investigation Preliminary Report

Location:	Hope Mills, NC	Accident Number:	ERA24LA230
Date & Time:	May 26, 2024, 11:00 Local	Registration:	N33563
Aircraft:	Piper PA-28-151	Injuries:	2 Serious, 1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

On May 26, 2024, at 1100 eastern daylight time, a Piper PA-28-151, N33563, was substantially damaged when it was involved in an accident near Hope Mills, North Carolina. The private pilot sustained minor injuries, and the two passengers were seriously injured. The airplane was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91 personal flight.

The pilot intended to fly from Grays Creek Airport (2GC), Fayetteville, North Carolina, to Johnston Regional Airport (JNX), Smithfield, North Carolina. According to the pilot, he conducted a preflight inspection of the airplane and subsequently taxied to the fueling pad, where he fueled the airplane to its maximum capacity of 48 gallons. The pilot and two passengers boarded the airplane, and the pilot started the engine.

There were no reported anomalies during the taxi, engine run-up or the subsequent takeoff roll, but shortly after initiating the initial climb, while climbing between 400 to 500 ft mean sea level (msl), the pilot noticed a drop in airspeed, and he was unable to maintain airspeed and altitude. The mixture and throttle controls were full forward, and the fuel pump was operating. He lowered the airplane's nose to maintain airspeed and avoid a stall, but he was unable to maintain level flight, so he pitched for best glide speed. He attempted to locate a suitable area to make a forced landing; however, the airplane impacted trees and terrain about 1/2-mile from the airport. The pilot and a passenger evacuated themselves and the other passenger who was unconscious as the airplane became engulfed in flames.

Postaccident examination of the wreckage by a Federal Aviation Administration inspector revealed the airplane had impacted heavily wooded terrain consisting of 50 to 75 ft tall pine trees. There was substantial damage to the airframe; the fuselage was consumed by fire. Both wings and the empennage were separated from the fuselage. The metal two-bladed fixed pitch propeller remained attached to the engine's crankshaft propeller flange. The propeller blades exhibited varying degrees of leading-edge damage, and chordwise scratching with torsional

twisting and s-bending on both blades. The engine was subjected to postimpact fire, and the exterior was damaged by thermal forces and impact.

During a subsequent interview with an FAA inspector the pilot stated that he had calculated a weight and balance for the flight which was 200 to 300 lbs below the airplane's maximum takeoff weight and that "everything was within limits."

The reported weather conditions at Fayetteville Regional Airport/Grannis Field (FAY), Fayetteville, North Carolina, which was about 6 miles north of 2GC included a temperature 82° F, dew point 70° F and an altimeter setting of 29.90inHg near the time of the accident.

The wreckage was retained for additional examination.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N33563
Model/Series:	PA-28-151	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Amateur Built:			
Operator:	CAPE FEAR AVIATION SERVICES LLC	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Designator Code:			

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	VMC	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	FAY,186 ft msl	Observation Time:	10:53 Local
Distance from Accident Site:	6 Nautical Miles	Temperature/Dew Point:	28°C /21°C
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	/ ,
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility:	10 miles
Altimeter Setting:	29.9 inches Hg	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Departure Point:	Hope Mills, NC	Destination:	Smithfield, NC (JNX)

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	2 Serious	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Serious, 1 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	34.893692,-78.843531

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Mccarter, Lawrence
Additional Participating Persons:	Bradley McCauley; FAA FSDO; Greensboro, NC Russel Gait; Lycoming Engines; Williamsport, PA Sean Holloway; Piper; Vero Beach, FL
Investigation Class:	Class 3
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.