



Aviation Investigation Preliminary Report

Location:	Clinton, MI	Accident Number:	CEN24FA215
Date & Time:	June 10, 2024, 13:11 Local	Registration:	N1039X
Aircraft:	Piper PA28	Injuries:	1 Fatal, 1 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Instructional		

On June 10, 2024, about 1311 Eastern daylight time, a Piper PA-28-140, N1039X, was substantially damaged when it was involved in an accident near Clinton, Michigan. The flight instructor was fatally injured, and the student pilot sustained serious injury. The airplane was operated by Solo Aviation Inc. as a Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 instructional flight.

According to the operator, the purpose of the flight was for the instructor and student pilot to conduct initial flight training maneuvers, and it was their first time flying together. Automatic Dependent Surveillance – Broadcast (ADS-B) data indicated that the airplane departed from Ann Arbor Municipal Airport (ARB) Ann Arbor, Michigan, about 1132. A review of preliminary air traffic control (ATC) voice communications revealed that the pilot contacted an ARB tower controller about 1308; the controller issued the local altimeter and instructed N1039X to proceed straight in for Runway 6. About one minute later, the accident airplane began descending and entered a left turn; the controller asked the pilot if they were still inbound, with no response. The airplane continued to descend to about 1,000 ft msl and dropped from radar. No further communications were received from the pilot.

The airplane impacted a field about 13 nautical miles southwest of ARB at an elevation of 910 ft msl. The first point of impact was located about 35 ft north of the main wreckage, with pieces of the right wingtip located in a shallow ground scar. The main wreckage came to rest on a true heading of 270°. All major structural components of the airplane were located at the accident site; the right wing was separated from the fuselage, and the forward fuselage was partially separated forward of the cabin door frame (See Figure 1.)



Figure 1. Wreckage with the separated right wing and partially separated forward fuselage.

Ground scars at the accident site and damage to the airplane were consistent with the airplane impacting terrain in a steep nose-down, right wing low attitude.

Fuel records indicated that the airplane was fueled on June 8th, 2024, at 12:25 with 13.9 gallons. A representative from Solo Aviation advised that the fuelers were instructed to fill the airplanes operated by Solo Aviation for instructional purposes “to the tabs.” Flight logs indicated one flight was made on June 8th, of about 1.2 hours of flight time before the accident flight, and no other fueling between these flights was noted.

During postaccident recovery, the left fuel tank was drained, and about 1.25 gallons of blue liquid, which was consistent with the odor of AVGAS, was collected. The fuel was tested for water, and no evidence of water was present. An unknown quantity of fuel from the left fuel tank leaked out of its severed fuel line during recovery operations.

The right fuel tank had a trace amount of liquid. The fuel tank contained an order consistent with AVGAS. The fuel tank was tested for water, and no water was present. The fuel cap was secure to the fuel tank fill, and the seal was intact and pliable. The fuel tank was tested for

leakage after recovery, and it was determined that the tank was not breached, and no leaks were observed. No fuel blight, moistened soil, or fuel staining was noted within the area of the right wing.

The fuel selector handle and valve were found between the left tank and the off position. The handle was rotated towards the off position beyond the lockout. The fuel selector valve was tested with low air pressure, and it did not flow in its as-found condition.

Flight control continuity was established through impact separations and cuts made by rescue personnel. The wreckage was recovered from the accident site and was transported to a secure location.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N1039X
Model/Series:	PA28 140	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Amateur Built:			
Operator:	Solo Aviation Inc	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:	KARB,822 ft msl	Observation Time:	12:53 Local
Distance from Accident Site:	13 Nautical Miles	Temperature/Dew Point:	18°C /7°C
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 4800 ft AGL	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	11 knots / 18 knots, 360°
Lowest Ceiling:		Visibility:	10 miles
Altimeter Setting:	29.87 inches Hg	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Departure Point:	Ann Arbor, MI (ARB)	Destination:	Ann Arbor, MI (ARB)

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal, 1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Fatal, 1 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	42.0833,-83.9478

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Brown, Zane

Additional Participating Persons: John Rieski; FAA; Bellville, MI
David Harsanyi; Lycoming; Williamsport, PA
Sean Holloway ; Piper Aircraft; Vero Beach, FL

Investigation Class: [Class 3](#)

Note: