



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Ft. Atkinson, Wisconsin	Accident Number:	CEN24LA288
Date & Time:	July 27, 2024, 11:00 Local	Registration:	N980BL
Aircraft:	Piper PA-28R-180	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Landing gear not configured	Injuries:	3 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot reported it was his first time landing at the airport and he was having difficulty locating it. Additionally, skydiving operations were in progress at the airport. Due to the distractions, he did not complete the normal downwind checklist and forgot to lower the landing gear. On final approach, another pilot announced he was on final for the opposite end of the accident pilot’s intended runway. The other pilot made a short approach and cleared the runway by the time the accident pilot was on a ½ mile final. The accident pilot did not visually confirm the status of the landing gear cockpit lights before landing. Upon hearing the warning horn for the landing gear, the pilot immediately lowered the landing gear and tried to remain airborne until the landing gear fully locked down. The airplane touched down before the left and nose landing gear fully locked down. The airplane departed the runway to the left and came to rest upright in the grass. During the runway excursion, the left wing impacted a runway light which resulted in substantial damage.

The pilot reported that there were no preimpact mechanical malfunctions or failures with the airframe or the engine that would have precluded normal operation. The pilot further reported that he should have performed a go around when the other pilot was landing and that the accident was a combination of fatigue, distractions, and coming into a strange airport for the first time.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

The pilot's failure to extend the landing gear before landing due to distractions and his failure to conduct the Before Landing checklist.

Findings

Personnel issues	Forgotten action/omission - Pilot
Personnel issues	Use of equip/system - Pilot
Personnel issues	Use of checklist - Pilot
Personnel issues	Attention - Pilot
Aircraft	Gear extension and retract sys - Not used/operated

Factual Information

History of Flight

Approach-VFR pattern downwind	Miscellaneous/other
Landing-flare/touchdown	Landing gear not configured (Defining event)
Landing-landing roll	Runway excursion

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial; Flight instructor	Age:	64, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Lap only
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane single-engine	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	June 9, 2023
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	December 19, 2023
Flight Time:	2002 hours (Total, all aircraft), 310 hours (Total, this make and model), 2002 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 17 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 3 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 0 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Passenger Information

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

Passenger Information

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

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N980BL
Model/Series:	PA-28R-180	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1969	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	28R-30497
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	April 1, 2024 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2500 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	3000 Hrs as of last inspection	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	I0-360
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	181 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:	KRYV,820 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	13 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	11:15 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	20°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	7 knots / None	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	None / None
Wind Direction:	200°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	30.12 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	25°C / 17°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Oshkosh, WI (OSH)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Ft. Atkinson, WI (61C)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	10:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	FORT ATKINSON MUNI 61C	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	800 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	21	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	3800 ft / 60 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Full stop

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	2 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	3 None	Latitude, Longitude:	42.963203,-88.817628

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Miller, Bradley
Additional Participating Persons:	Dave Wincell; FAA Milwaukee FSDO; Milwaukee, WI
Original Publish Date:	October 22, 2024
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 4
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=194798

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](#).