



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Chetek, Wisconsin	Accident Number:	CEN24LA322
Date & Time:	August 14, 2024, 12:30 Local	Registration:	N3613W
Aircraft:	Piper PA-32-260	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Hard landing	Injuries:	1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot reported that the airplane landed hard and bounced. He attempted to recover by flaring the nose up to bleed off energy as a gust of wind blew the airplane to the left of runway centerline. The pilot stated that during the hard landing he hit his head on the glareshield and momentarily lost consciousness. When he regained consciousness, the airplane was flying towards the trees located to the east of runway 17. The airplane collided with the trees and both wings separated from the fuselage; the airplane sustained substantial damage to the fuselage and empennage.

The pilot reported that there were no preimpact mechanical malfunctions or failures that would have precluded normal operations.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

The pilot's improper landing flare and hard landing.

Findings

Personnel issues	Aircraft control - Pilot
Aircraft	Landing flare - Not attained/maintained
Environmental issues	Gusts - Ability to respond/compensate

Factual Information

History of Flight

Landing-flare/touchdown	Hard landing (Defining event)
Landing-flare/touchdown	Attempted remediation/recovery
Landing-flare/touchdown	Other weather encounter
Landing	Loss of control in flight
Landing	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	34, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Lap only
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	January 4, 2024
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	June 27, 2024
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 90 hours (Total, all aircraft), 21.7 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 35.2 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 1.6 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N3613W
Model/Series:	PA-32-260	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1966	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	32-514
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	6
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	December 15, 2023 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3400 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	O-540
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	260 Horsepower
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Does Business As:	On file	Operator Designator Code:	NA

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KRPD,1105 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	9 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	12:35 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	319°
Lowest Cloud Condition:		Visibility	7 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 4100 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	12 knots / 16 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	Unknown / None
Wind Direction:	140°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	Unknown / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	30.11 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	27°C / 15°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	Chetek, WI (Y23)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Chetek, WI (Y23)	Type of Clearance:	VFR flight following
Departure Time:	12:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	Chetek Municipal/Southworth Airport Y23	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	1056 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	17	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	3401 ft / 60 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Full stop;Traffic pattern

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	45.305537,-91.635385(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Maxon, Cory
Additional Participating Persons:	Greg Thurstin; FAA; Minneapolis, MN
Original Publish Date:	November 8, 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=194974

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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](#).