



Aviation Investigation Preliminary Report

Location:	Vergennes, VT	Accident Number:	ERA24FA371
Date & Time:	September 8, 2024, 12:25 Local	Registration:	N3757T
Aircraft:	Piper PA28R	Injuries:	4 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Instructional		

On September 8, 2024, at about 1225 eastern daylight time, a Piper PA28R-180, N3757T, was substantially damaged when it was involved in an accident near Vergennes, Vermont. The student pilot, the flight instructor, and the two passengers were fatally injured. The airplane was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulation* Part 91 instructional flight.

The airplane had departed Windham Airport (IJD), Willimantic, Connecticut earlier that morning with a destination of the Basin Harbor Airport (B06), Vergennes, VT. Preliminary Automatic Dependent System-Broadcast (ADS-B) data revealed that after departing IJD, the airplane flew toward B06. The airplane's last ADS-B-derived position was recorded at 1016, with the airplane about 1,000 ft north of the approach end of runway 20 at B06. The ADS-B-reported altitude was 250 ft msl. There were no ADS-B data available for the airplane's departure from B06, which was the accident flight.

A witness recorded a video of the airplane as it departed from B06 on the accident flight. The airplane's takeoff roll began about 1224 . The airplane rolled down the runway until it exited the frame and the video ended. The video did not capture the airplane's takeoff, initial climb, or the accident.

The airplane impacted terrain in a wooded area about 375 ft east of the departure end of runway 20 at B06. The first identified impact point was a ground scar that contained a portion of the left wingtip. The airplane came to rest approximately 30 ft from the initial impact point. All major components of the airplane were accounted for within the wreckage area and there was no evidence of fire. The left wing exhibited impact damage, had separated from the fuselage, and was found inverted and adjacent to the fuselage. The right wing remained attached to the fuselage and displayed impact damage to its leading edge. The fuselage sustained impact damage, with most of the damage being to the forward cabin area,

instrument panel, and engine compartment. The empennage remained attached to the fuselage and was relatively intact.

Flight control cable continuity was established for all of the flight controls with the only breaks being of the left aileron direct cable and the aileron balance cable. The breaks displayed tensile overload signatures. The flaps were in the retracted position and the main landing gear and landing gear control switch were found in the extended position. The nose landing gear was impact damaged and was observed in the retracted position.

The fuel selector valve was observed in the "LEFT" position and was in the detent. Low pressure air was blown through the fuel selector valve, and it was found to be unobstructed in both the "LEFT" and "RIGHT" positions. The left main fuel tank was absent of fuel; however, blue staining was noted around the fuel filler cap and the rivet line around the fuel tank. The left fuel system was breached at the fuel line going from the left fuel tank to the fuel selector valve; the break was consistent with impact-related damage. The right fuel tank contained approximately 1.5 gallons of fluid with a color and odor consistent with 100LL aviation fuel. A sample of the fluid from the right fuel tank was absent of contaminants, and a test utilizing water-finding paste was negative for the presence of water. The right fuel system was breached at the fuel line going to the fuel selector valve, with the break displaying signatures consistent with impact-related damage.

The wreckage was retained for further examination.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N3757T
Model/Series:	PA28R 180	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Amateur Built:			
Operator:	On file	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:	BTV,340 ft msl	Observation Time:	12:54 Local
Distance from Accident Site:	19 Nautical Miles	Temperature/Dew Point:	15°C /4°C
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 5000 ft AGL	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	13 knots / 21 knots, 220°
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 6000 ft AGL	Visibility:	10 miles
Altimeter Setting:	29.82 inches Hg	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	NONE
Departure Point:	Vergennes, VT	Destination:	Willimantic, CT (IJD)

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	2 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	2 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	4 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	44.188818,-73.357341

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Gibson, Kurt
Additional Participating Persons:	Matthew Hall; FAA/FSDO; Portland, ME Kris Wetherell; Piper Aircraft; Vero Beach, FL
Investigation Class:	Class 3
Note:	