



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Blaney Park, Michigan	Accident Number:	CHI03LA130
Date & Time:	May 19, 2003, 15:00 Local	Registration:	N9181P
Aircraft:	Piper PA-24-260	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The airplane impacted trees and terrain while on landing approach. The pilot reported encountering a sudden sink rate 125 to 150 feet above ground level, while descending to land on runway 16. The pilot noted he increased engine power and pulled back on the yoke in an attempt to stop the descent. The pilot stated the airplane continued to descend and impacted a line of trees. The pilot reported the airplane slid 15 to 20 feet and pivoted to the right 180 degrees. At 1557, a weather reporting station, 13 nautical miles to the west-southwest of the accident site, reported the winds from 210 degrees at 10 knots, gusting to 14 knots.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's failure to maintain clearance with the tree line. Factors contributing to this accident were the wind gusts and the trees.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: APPROACH - VFR PATTERN - FINAL APPROACH

Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - GUSTS
2. (F) OBJECT - TREE(S)
3. (C) ALTITUDE/CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. TERRAIN CONDITION - GROUND

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

5. TERRAIN CONDITION - GROUND

Factual Information

On May 19, 2003, at 1500 eastern daylight time, a Piper PA-24-260, N9181P, piloted by a private pilot, sustained substantial damage when it impacted trees, while on approach to runway 16 (3,000 feet by 90 feet, macadam) at a private airstrip near Blaney Park, Michigan. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time of the accident. The personal flight was operating under the provisions of 14 CFR Part 91 without a flight plan. The pilot reported minor injuries. The flight departed Pontiac, Michigan, at 1215.

The pilot reported he encountered a "sudden sink rate" while descending to land at the private airstrip. The pilot noted he was at 125 to 150 feet above ground level when the airplane began the uncontrolled descent. The pilot stated he increased power and applied backpressure to the yoke. The pilot indicated the airplane continued to descend into a line of trees 75 to 100 feet from the end of the runway. The pilot reported the airplane impacted the trees and subsequently the terrain short of the runway. The pilot noted the airplane slid 15 to 20 feet and pivoted to the right about 180 degrees.

The pilot reported there were no mechanical malfunctions or failures during the accident flight.

At 1557, a weather reporting station at Schoolcraft County Airport (ISQ), 13 nautical miles to the west-southwest of the accident site, reported the winds from 210 degrees at 10 knots, gusting to 14 knots.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	84, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	November 27, 2001
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	October 31, 2001
Flight Time:	2795 hours (Total, all aircraft), 2795 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 50 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 20 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N9181P
Model/Series:	PA-24-260	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	24-4671
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	February 27, 2003 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3600 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	50 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	4462 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	IO-540-D4A5
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	260 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:	ISQ,685 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	13 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	15:57 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	227°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 1700 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	10 knots / 14 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	210°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.09 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	17°C / 10°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Pontiac, MI (PTK)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Blaney Park, MI (PVT)	Type of Clearance:	VFR
Departure Time:	12:15 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	Private PVT	Runway Surface Type:	Macadam
Airport Elevation:	745 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	16	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	3000 ft / 90 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Full stop

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	46.127777,-85.941665

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Fox, Andrew
Additional Participating Persons:	Vito Carello; FAA-Grand Rapids FSDO; Grand Rapids, MI
Original Publish Date:	March 2, 2004
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=57027

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