



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Alzada, Montana	Accident Number:	SEA03LA111
Date & Time:	June 21, 2003, 08:15 Local	Registration:	N4565M
Aircraft:	Piper PA-11	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The student pilot, who had logged at least 93 hours of flight time in the accident aircraft (total time), was engaged in livestock spotting at low altitude (200 feet above ground) in turbulent conditions with a wind out of the northwest estimated at 20 knots. During a 40-degree angle of bank, right 180 degree turn, the aircraft's angle of bank exceeded 90 degrees and the pilot applied full left aileron and rudder with no effect. The aircraft continued a rolling right descent and when about 80-90 feet above ground, the roll reversed into a left roll during which the left wingtip and nose impacted the ground. The aircraft cartwheeled counter-clockwise 270 degrees to a stop during which the engine separated from the airframe. A post-crash fire consumed the aircraft.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The student pilot's failure to maintain adequate flying airspeed in a turn while maneuvering close to the ground resulting in a stall condition. A contributing factor was the turbulent wind conditions.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - TURBULENCE
 2. (C) AIRSPEED - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
 3. STALL - INADVERTENT
 4. ALTITUDE - LOW - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

5. TERRAIN CONDITION - GROUND

Factual Information

On June 21, 2003, approximately 0815 mountain daylight time, a Piper PA-11, N4565M, registered to Pilster Ranch Corp., and being flown by a student pilot was destroyed in a post-crash fire following a loss of control in flight while maneuvering approximately 14 miles north-northwest of Alzada, Montana. The pilot was uninjured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and no flight plan had been filed. The flight, which was personal (livestock spotting), was operated under 14CFR91, and originated from the pilot's ranch approximately 0800.

The pilot, who had been issued a student pilot certificate on July 21, 2000 (concurrent with his last known Class III medical) reported that he departed the Pilster Ranch approximately 12 nautical miles north of Alzada and was checking livestock north of highway 212. He indicated that the wind was from the northwest about 20 knots and he was flying eastbound about 200 feet above ground at 2000 RPM. He noted something of interest on the ground and began a right 40-degree angle of bank turn. He had turned right almost to the point of flying directly into the wind when the aircraft's angle of bank exceeded 90 degrees right wing down. He reported that he "...had the stick and rudder all the way over to the left, but the plane did not respond and it started to roll in towards the ground...."

He continued, relating that when about 80-90 feet above ground the aircraft rolled back to the left and the left wingtip struck the ground followed by the nose. The aircraft cartwheeled counter-clockwise 270 degrees to a stop coming to rest with the engine detached and about six feet forward and left of the cockpit. He noted a fire forward of the cockpit area, exited the aircraft, and radioed for help. The pilot reported light to moderate turbulence at the time of the accident.

A copy of the pilot's logbook opened with the first entry logged July 19, 2000. The last entry logged was October 7, 2001, and the total flight time recorded was approximately 93 hours, all in the PA-11.

Student pilot Information

Certificate:	Student	Age:	34, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Expired	Last FAA Medical Exam:	July 21, 2000
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	93 hours (Total, all aircraft), 93 hours (Total, this make and model), 77 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N4565M
Model/Series:	PA-11	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	1168
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	August 28, 2002 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	5803 Hrs as of last inspection	Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	Installed	Engine Model/Series:	C90
Registered Owner:	Pilster Ranch Corp.	Rated Power:	90 Horsepower
Operator:	Pilster, Lane R.	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	BHK,2973 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	74 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	07:53 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	360°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 1300 ft AGL	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	14 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	300°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.61 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	16°C / 13°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Pilster Ranch, MT	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	08:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	On-ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	45.17139,-104.68

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	McCreary, Steven
Additional Participating Persons:	Chuck Clark; FAA FSDO; Helena, MT
Original Publish Date:	March 2, 2004
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=57275

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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](#).