



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Gaithersburg, Maryland	Accident Number:	ERA11CA486
Date & Time:	August 26, 2011, 07:00 Local	Registration:	N3020M
Aircraft:	Piper PA-44-180	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Loss of control on ground	Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot reported that he was taxiing to the active runway for takeoff when the windshield became foggy and he missed the left turn to the runway. The airplane exited the taxiway onto a grassy area, the pilot then turned left, and the airplane slid down a hill. The airplane's right main landing gear collapsed, and the right wing impacted the ground, which resulted in substantial damage to the right wing spar. The pilot did not report any mechanical malfunctions with the airplane that would have precluded normal operation.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's decision to continue taxiing with restricted windshield visibility.

Findings

Aircraft	Directional control - Not attained/maintained
Environmental issues	Low visibility - Decision related to condition
Environmental issues	Sloped/uneven terrain - Contributed to outcome

Factual Information

History of Flight

Taxi-to runway	Miscellaneous/other
Taxi-to runway	Loss of control on ground (Defining event)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial; Flight instructor	Age:	39,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane multi-engine; Instrument airplane	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	September 13, 2010
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	1400 hours (Total, all aircraft), 96 hours (Total, this make and model)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N3020M
Model/Series:	PA-44-180	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	44-7995220
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	June 11, 2011 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3800 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	80 Hrs	Engines:	2 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	7607 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-360 SER
Registered Owner:	MORGAN EDWARD T	Rated Power:	180 Horsepower
Operator:	Washington Int'l Flight Academy, LLC	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	GAI, 539 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:	07:35 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 200 ft AGL	Visibility	2 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	0 knots / None	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	0°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.03 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	18°C / 18°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Gaithersburg, MD (GAI)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	VFR
Destination:	Gaithersburg, MD (GAI)	Type of Clearance:	Special VFR
Departure Time:		Type of Airspace:	

Airport Information

Airport:	Montgomery County GAI	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	539 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	14	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	4202 ft / 75 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	39.168334,-77.165832(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Schiada, Luke
Additional Participating Persons:	Anthony Serio; FAA/FSDO; Baltimore, MD
Original Publish Date:	December 27, 2011
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	This accident report documents the factual circumstances of this accident as described to the NTSB.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=81749

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