



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	VALPARAISO, Indiana	Accident Number:	CEN18LA165
Date & Time:	May 8, 2018, 14:15 Local	Registration:	N99GN
Aircraft:	Piper PA 34-200	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Loss of control in flight	Injuries:	1 Serious, 1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Instructional		

Analysis

The pilot receiving instruction and the flight instructor were conducting multiple approaches to the airport. During a simulated engine-out go-around, when the pilot advanced the throttle of the operating engine to full power, he allowed the airspeed to drop below the single-engine minimum controllable airspeed. Subsequently, the pilot lost airplane control, and the airplane descended and impacted terrain. Examination of the airplane revealed no evidence of any preaccident mechanical malfunctions or failures that would have precluded normal operation. The instructor should have been monitoring the pilot's airspeed control and his failure to do so contributed to the accident.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

The pilot receiving instruction's failure to maintain a safe operating airspeed, which resulted in a loss of airplane control. Contributing to the accident was the flight instructor's failure to monitor the pilot's airspeed control.

Findings

Aircraft	Airspeed - Not attained/maintained
Personnel issues	Aircraft control - Student/instructed pilot
Personnel issues	Monitoring other person - Instructor/check pilot

Factual Information

History of Flight

Approach-VFR go-around	Loss of control in flight (Defining event)
Uncontrolled descent	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)

On May 8, 2018, about 1315 central daylight time, a Piper PA-34-200 airplane, N99GN, collided with terrain following a go-around at the Porter County Airport (KVPZ), Valparaiso, Indiana. The flight instructor was seriously injured and the pilot receiving instruction had minor injuries. The airplane was substantially damaged. The airplane was registered to and operated by Griffith Aviation, Inc., under the provisions of 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91 as an instructional flight. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the flight, which operated without a flight plan. The flight departed Griffith-Merrillville Airport (05C), Griffith, Indiana, about 1000.

According to information provided by representatives from the Griffith Aviation Inc. flight school, the pilot receiving instruction was performing approaches to KVPZ. The second approach was a simulated engine out approach to a planned go-around. During the go-around, the airplane's speed dropped below the single-engine minimum controlled airspeed as the pilot advanced the throttle of the operating engine to full power. He lost control of the airplane, and the airplane descended and collided with terrain.

Representatives from the Federal Aviation Administration examined the wreckage and did not find any preimpact anomalies which would have contributed to the accident. Substantial damage was sustained to the right wing spar and fuselage.

Student pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	23, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	3-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 1 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	April 28, 2017
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	February 18, 2018
Flight Time:	204 hours (Total, all aircraft), 25 hours (Total, this make and model), 151 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 120 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 25 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 8 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Flight instructor Information

Certificate:	Commercial; Flight instructor	Age:	54,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	3-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane multi-engine; Airplane single-engine; Instrument airplane	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 1 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	October 2, 2017
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	October 9, 2017
Flight Time:	2093 hours (Total, all aircraft), 94 hours (Total, this make and model), 1945 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 127 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 55 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 7 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N99GN
Model/Series:	PA 34-200 200	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1972	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	34-7250030
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	6
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	April 2, 2018 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3999 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	89 Hrs	Engines:	2 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	8558.6 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	C91 installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	IO-360-C1E6
Registered Owner:	GRIFFITH AVIATION INC	Rated Power:	200 Horsepower
Operator:	GRIFFITH AVIATION INC	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	Pilot school (141)

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KVPZ, 770 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	0 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	17:56 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	141°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	6 knots / None	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	240°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.14 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	26°C / 6°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	GRIFFITH, IN (05C)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	GRIFFITH, IN (05C)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	10:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	

Airport Information

Airport:	PORTER COUNTY RGNL VPZ	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	770 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	27	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	7001 ft / 150 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious, 1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious, 1 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	41.453887,-87.006942(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Aguilera, Jason
Additional Participating Persons:	Kurt Stiefel ; FAA FSDO; Des Plaines, IL
Original Publish Date:	December 16, 2019
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=97222

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

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](#).