

Inspector's statement

Aircraft N4812Y PA-25-235 Serial Number 25-4594

On June 27, 2013, I investigated the accident aircraft and spoke with the pilot, Mr. Brad Slaughter. The investigation focused on the aircraft braking system due to the complaint of loss of braking made by the pilot.

During the investigation I discovered that the right brake system was still intact and when the brake pedal was depressed the associated brake actuated. At the time of the accident the pilot stated that when he pressed on the brake pedal he felt very little pressure, if any at all. The brake pressure that he felt in the brake during the investigation was more than he had when he landed but not as much as he had in the past when the brake was operating normally. A comparison could not be made using the left brake due to the fact the brake line was disconnected when the left main landing gear was damaged in the accident.

The pilot mentioned that during the landing the brake pedal was contacting the back side of the hopper, which is mounted in-front of the pilot. It was found that when full right rudder was applied and the brake pedal was pressed, the pedal came in contact with the back side of the hopper. The brake pedal did have enough travel to actuate the brake before contacting the hopper, although it is possible that the brake pedal did not have enough travel before contacting the hopper to apply the needed braking action at the time of the landing.

The brake was applied with the rudder in the neutral position and while maintaining pressure on the brake pedal I found that the system did hold the pressure without bleeding down. This indicated to me that the system did not have an internal leak that would cause the pressure to the brake to decrease.

The pilot also stated that he has had problems with the right brake in the past. This problem was corrected when the brake caliper was replaced about a year ago. The brake had been operating normally since that work was done and he had not noticed any brake abnormalities up to the time of this landing.

During the investigation the pilot got in the cockpit and actuated the brake, at one point I was in the cockpit actuating the brake then at the end of the day I asked the pilot to get in the cockpit and press on the brake pedal again. When he did, he mentioned that the brake felt better (needed less travel to build brake pressure) than it did the first time he was in the cockpit earlier in the day.

In conclusion, during the investigation it appeared that the brake was working to the point that when the brake pedal was pressed the brake was actuated. With full right rudder applied the brake pedal did contact the hopper but it is unknown if the amount of pressure applied to the brake in this condition was enough to provide adequate braking action.



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