

Inspectors Statement

NTSB#: CEN21LA044

Accident Aircraft: N3606A, Piper PA-22-135, MSN 22-1866

Page 1 of 2

On November 08, 2020, I received a phone call from office manager Nick Eull concerning an aircraft accident near Killdeer, ND. I was then contacted by the ND Highway Patrol (NDHP) and Dunn County Sheriff's Department. The Sheriff's department was the first law enforcement on scene and reported that the pilot was deceased. A witness had told them the pilot was the sole occupant.

On November 09, 2020, I arrived on scene of the accident and discovered the aircraft had been moved to a location in nearby Killdeer, ND. The Sheriff Deputy had ordered the aircraft be moved by 4-Aces Towing company in Killdeer. 4-Aces moved the aircraft as instructed shortly after the body had been removed by the coroner. The Deputy's explanation for moving the aircraft was understandable but was not approved by the NTSB or FAA. The crash scene / position of the aircraft was documented by images from the Sheriff Deputy and NDHP.

Investigation:

The accident aircraft departed the private unimproved runway to the south. Weather at the time of departure was estimated at 500 feet overcast in fog and light drizzle. Night instrument meteorological conditions prevailed (IMC). The runway owner and friend of the pilot in command (PIC) stated the PIC was nervous about the weather conditions and was checking weather every 30 minutes two hours before departure. The witness, who is also a private pilot, offered the PIC his vehicle to take home but the PIC declined.

At approximately 20:00 Mountain Standard Time (MST), the PIC told the witness he was going to depart for nearby Dickinson, ND (KDIK) for a fuel stop. The PIC believed the weather in KDIK to be 2500 feet overcast. He (PIC) would then be able to fly straight east back to Fargo into improving weather conditions. The PIC believed that once airborne, he would be able to see the lights of KDIK about 22 miles away. He departed shortly after.

The witness stated that he followed the aircraft during take-off using his headlights to illuminate the runway. The witness stated he lost the aircraft lights in the overcast / fog within seconds after departure. The witness then stated he could hear the aircraft in the overcast and it sounded like it was returning back to the runway. He heard the aircraft running at high RPM and heard a loud "crack". It was then he knew the aircraft had crashed. The witness called 911 for emergency services and immediately he and his brother began to look for the aircraft. The witness stated they looked for quite some time but it was a "black night" and very hard to see. The wreckage was located on top of a hill about ¼ mile south west from the departure point. The aircraft was destroyed and the pilot was deceased.

Ground scar analysis, impact signatures, and wreckage fragmentation patterns disclosed that the airplane impacted the terrain in a near 90 degree bank angle with high forward velocity and low angle. Fragments of the right wing along with transfer evidence indicate the right wing tip impacted a fence post. This was the first point of impact. A large ground scar was found 30 feet from the right wing

impact point. This ground scar was the right side fuselage as evidenced by the remaining right wing material torn off at this impact. The right landing gear was also located at this point. The aircraft bounced and became airborne as evidenced by a third ground scar 50 feet beyond the second (fuselage) ground scar. At this point it is likely the aircraft began to cartwheel as evidenced by the widening debris field. The remaining parts of the fuselage came to rest 180 feet beyond the initial point of impact. The engine was located 260 feet beyond the initial point of impact. The firewall and engine mount could not be located.

Findings:

The PIC had completed his Private Pilot Check ride in 6/2020. The PIC had accumulated a total time of 81.5 hours. 77 of those hours were in the accident aircraft. The PIC had 4.4 hours of night flying. Of the 4.4 hours of night flying, 1.2 hours were solo according to his logbook. The aircraft was configured with standard instruments and was not certified for instrument flying conditions.

Weather at the time of departure was low overcast in fog and light drizzle. The rural night time conditions, no runway lighting and low overcast presented almost zero visibility to the non-instrument rated PIC.

Weather information was triangulated from Flight Service Stations in Dickinson, ND (KDIK), Hazen, ND (KHZE) and Watford City, ND (KS25).

Flight control continuity could not be established due to the extensive damage. The empennage had been separated from the fuselage and the control surfaces destroyed. The engine appeared to be running at full power up to the time of impact as evidenced by the witness statement.

The aircraft was operating as a personal / pleasure flight under the provisions of 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91.

Forensic results from Fore Flight data and an ongoing *meteorological study* had not yet been obtained at the time of this Inspectors Statement.

PERRY W OCHSNER Digitally signed by PERRY W OCHSNER
Date: 2020.12.15 13:40:17 -06'00'

Perry W. Ochsner
Federal Aviation Administration
Flight Standards District Office, Fargo, ND

HZE	2020-11-08 01:55KHZE 080155Z AUTO 08006G12KT 10SM OVC007 02/02 A2952 RMK AO2
S25	2020-11-08 01:55KS25 080155Z AUTO 10009KT 7SM OVC006 01/01 A2950 RMK AO2 PWINO
DIK	2020-11-08 01:56KDIK 080156Z AUTO 09010KT 10SM CLR 02/00 A2943 RMK AO2 SLP989 T00170000
HZE	2020-11-08 02:15KHZE 080215Z AUTO 08005KT 10SM OVC007 02/02 A2952 RMK AO2
S25	2020-11-08 02:15KS25 080215Z AUTO 11010KT 7SM OVC006 01/01 A2949 RMK AO2 PWINO
HZE	2020-11-08 02:35KHZE 080235Z AUTO 07005KT 10SM OVC008 02/02 A2952 RMK AO2
S25	2020-11-08 02:35KS25 080235Z AUTO 09007KT 7SM OVC007 01/01 A2949 RMK AO2 PWINO
HZE	2020-11-08 02:55KHZE 080255Z AUTO 06006KT 10SM OVC008 02/02 A2951 RMK AO2
S25	2020-11-08 02:55KS25 080255Z AUTO 09008KT 6SM BR OVC007 01/01 A2948 RMK AO2 PWINO