

National Transportation Safety Board

Office of Aviation Safety

Washington, DC 20594



CEN24FA028

EXAMINATION SUMMARY

October 31, 2023

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A. ACCIDENT

Location: McCook, Nebraska
Date: October 31, 2023
Time: 1200 (Local)
1700 (UTC)
Airplane: Piper PA 46-350P, N501KC

B. EXAMINATION SUMMARY

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C. SUMMARY

The examination summary of the accident airplane on October 31, 2023, in McCook, Nebraska.

D. DETAILS OF THE INVESTIGATION

1.0 Accident Site

The airplane impacted trees and terrain in a residential neighborhood. The first impact marks were tree strikes on large cedar trees. The debris field continued on a 200° heading for about 90 ft. Downed branches and portions of the composite propeller blades were scattered around the vicinity. The airplane's left horizontal stabilizer and portions of the left wing were located between tree strikes and the main wreckage.

The main wreckage consisted of the fuselage, empennage, and right wing. The fuselage came to rest inverted and was resting on the right wing which had separated from the fuselage near the wing root.

All major flight control surfaces were located at the accident site.

The fuel tanks were breached, and a strong odor of fuel was present.

2.0 Airframe Examination

2.1 Fuselage

The fuselage remained largely intact. The occupant seats remained attached to the seat tracks. The baggage in the airplane was removed and weights documented.

2.2 Empennage

The empennage was largely intact. Both horizontal stabilizers and elevators were impact separated from the empennage. Rudder and elevators cable continuity was confirmed from the empennage through to the cockpit controls.

2.3 Airplane Wings

Both wings were impact separated. The left wing was fragmented into several portions and was located between the tree strikes and the fuselage. The right wing was impact separated and located underneath the main wreckage, largely in one piece.

Aileron cables were fractured in areas corresponding with impact damage. All aileron flight controls appeared to be continuous prior to the accident.

Flap controls were measured, and readings will be updated.

2.4 Landing Gear

The landing gear appeared to be in the retracted position.

2.5 Cockpit

The cockpit remained largely intact. The standby instruments were photo-documented. The cockpit was largely "glass" and download of non-volatile memory will be attempted.

2.6 Survivability

First responders indicated that the pilot was secured to his seat via a 3-point restraint. The aft-facing passenger was secured by a lap belt.

2.7 Fuel/Fuel System

The fuel tanks were all breached with the exception of the header tank. The recovery team extracted at least 10 gallons of fuel from the header tank. The fuel appeared clean of debris and water.

Statements obtained by the Federal Aviation Administration reported that the pilot ordered fuel to "top off" the main fuel tanks and about 10 gallons of fuel in each auxiliary tank.

3.0 Engine Examination

The engine remained attached to the fuselage via engine control cables. No obvious signs of engine failure were observed. A detailed engine examination would be conducted after the airplane is recovered.

4.0 Propeller Examination

The airplane was equipped with a 4-bladed composite MT Propeller. All four blades were found fragmented. All 4 blade tips accounted for at the accident site. The propeller hub remained attached to the engine via the propeller flange.

Submitted by:

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