



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Office of Aviation Safety
Western Pacific Region

March 12, 2018

ACCIDENT SITE EXAMINATION SUMMARY

WPR18FA104

This document contains 6 embedded images.

A. ACCIDENT

Location: La Center, WA
Date: March 11, 2018
Aircraft: Piper PA-18-150, N4511Y
NTSB Investigator-in-Charge: Maja Smith

B. SUMMARY

Examination of the accident site was conducted on March 11 and March 12, 2018. All major structural components of the airplane were located at the accident site. The wreckage was recovered to a secure location for further examination.

C. DETAILS OF THE INVESTIGATION

1.0 Accident Site Examination

Main Wreckage: 43°38'19.39"N, 116°14'28.86"W– Elevation: 581 feet

The accident site was located in the wooded terrain field near privately owned Daybreak Airport (WA46), Le Center, WA. The wreckage was positioned about 530 ft from the approach end of runway 31 on a 228° bearing from the runway.

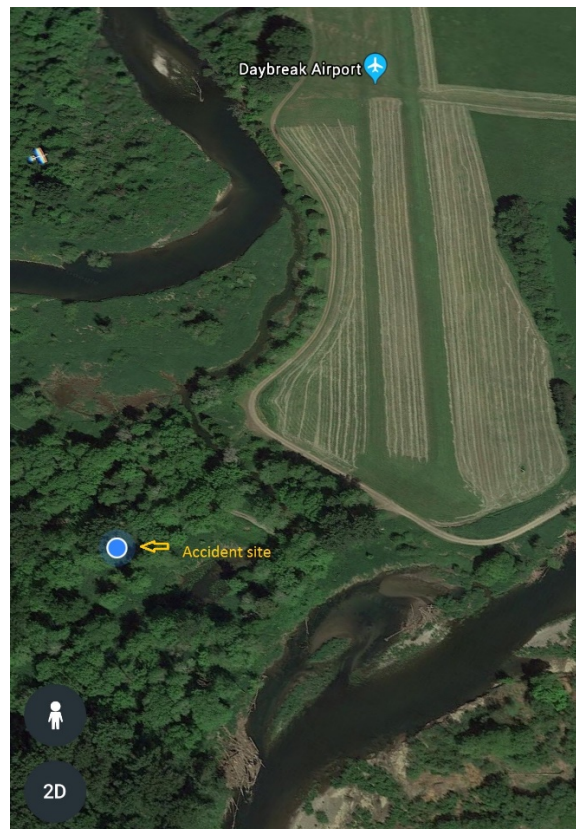


Image 1-Satellite View



Image 2-First point of impact and main wreckage (satellite view)



Image 3. First point of contact and the wreckage

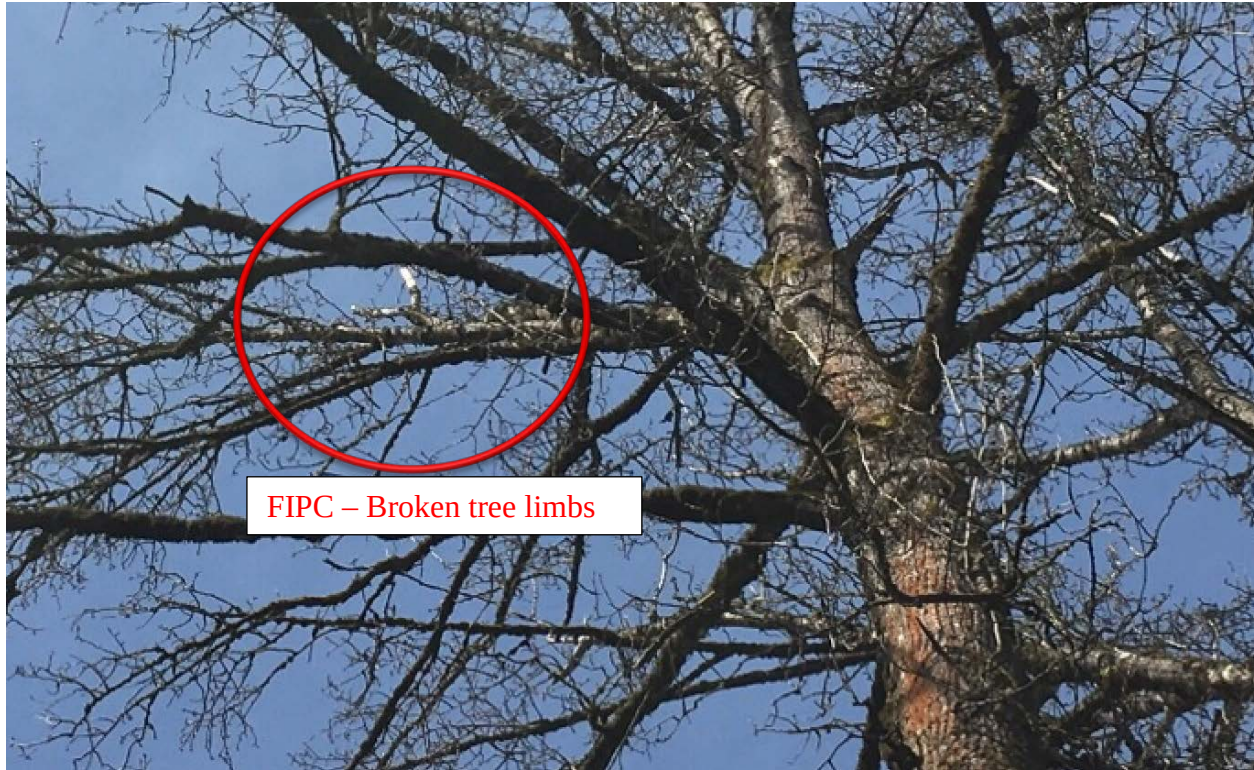


Image 4. First point of contact – Broken tree limbs

The first identified point of contact (FIPC) consisted of several broken tree limbs at the top of a 140-foot tall tree. A piece of the left wing landing light cover lens was found underneath the tree which was consistent with the left wing contacting the tree. A debris of broken tree limbs on the ground continued for the rest of the flight path on an approximate heading of 120°. The airplane came to rest about 142 ft from FIPC and was oriented north-west on a heading of 270°.



Image 4 – airplane wreckage

The airplane impacted terrain in a nose down attitude. The propeller hub and one blade were imbedded in the ground and created about 2 ft deep hole. The other blade extruded from the ground. Both blades remained attached to the hub. The top of the engine cowling was found crushed around the engine.

The fuselage came to rest on its right side and exhibited twisting throughout. The empennage remained attached to the fuselage and was bent upward. The vertical stabilizer, horizontal stabilizer, rudder and elevators remained attached to the empennage and were undamaged.



Image 5 – Right wing



Image 6 – Impact damage on the left wing

Both wings remained attached to the fuselage. The outboard portion of the left wing's leading edge, around landing lights, was torn and crushed in the aft direction, consistent with the tree branches impact. Small pieces of branches were imbedded throughout the wing. The strut was still attached and connected to the lower fuselage. The right wing was slightly bent backwards and twisted. The right wing tip was crushed which was consistent with the ground impact. The inboard portion of the right wing exhibited inboard crushing. The strut was still attached and connected to the fuselage. All flight control surfaces remained attached to their respective hinges.

The fixed main landing gear remained attached to the fuselage. The right landing gear buckled under the fuselage and was displaced to the left.

The cockpit area with the instrument panel was crushed and displaced forward into the firewall. The lap belt was found unbuckled. The shoulder straps were cut by the first responders. The throttle was found in the open positions. The mixture lever was pushed all the way in. The fuel selector lever pointed to the left tank.

All flight controls were attached to the airframe, and the continuity of the flight control system was confirmed.

The battery and the ELT were found on and were subsequently disarmed by the FAA personnel. Responding fire department personnel reported noting a strong odor of fuel at the wreckage and subsequently they used foam to spray both fuel tanks and the fuselage. The left wing's fuel tank had puncture holes, and no fuel was noted. During the recovery procedure, some fuel was noted dripping from the right tank and about 36 ounces was subsequently drained.