



AVIATION



HIGHWAY



MARINE



RAILROAD



PIPELINE

Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Watsonville, California	Accident Number:	WPR23LA082
Date & Time:	January 1, 2023, 14:40 Local	Registration:	N7181A
Aircraft:	Cessna 172	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Collision during takeoff/land	Injuries:	1 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Instructional		

Analysis

The student pilot reported that, she initiated a go around when she realized that she was low while on final approach. During the go around, the airplane struck powerlines, impacted terrain, and came to rest nose down. The right wing and the fuselage were substantially damaged. The student pilot reported that there were no preaccident mechanical malfunctions or failures with the airplane that would have precluded normal operation.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

The pilot's failure to maintain clearance from powerlines during a go around.

Findings

Aircraft	Altitude - Not attained/maintained
Personnel issues	Decision making/judgment - Pilot
Environmental issues	Wire - Awareness of condition

Factual Information

History of Flight

Initial climb	Collision during takeoff/land (Defining event)
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Student pilot Information

Certificate:	Student	Age:	73,Female
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	4-point
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	January 15, 2022
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	183 hours (Total, all aircraft), 168 hours (Total, this make and model), 49 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 31 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 8 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Cessna	Registration:	N7181A
Model/Series:	172	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1956	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	29281
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:		Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2200 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	Installed	Engine Model/Series:	O-300-A
Registered Owner:	WARMKESSEL JAMES R	Rated Power:	
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KWVI,162 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	0 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	14:53 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	355°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	4 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	180°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.83 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	14°C / 3°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Watsonville, CA	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Watsonville, CA	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:		Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	WATSONVILLE MUNI WVI	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	163 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	20	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	4502 ft / 149 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Go around;Traffic pattern

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	36.935733,-121.78963

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Rho, Paul

Additional Participating Persons: Jose Fierro; FAA; San Jose, CA

Original Publish Date: March 2, 2023

Last Revision Date:

Investigation Class: [Class 4](#)

Note: The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.

Investigation Docket: <https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=106536>

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](#).