



AVIATION



HIGHWAY



MARINE



RAILROAD



PIPELINE

# Aviation Investigation Final Report

<b>Location:</b>	South Lyon, Michigan	<b>Accident Number:</b>	CEN24LA113
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	February 12, 2024, 11:50 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N87965
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Piper J3C-65	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>	Collision during takeoff/land	<b>Injuries:</b>	1 None
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

## Analysis

The pilot reported that while on final approach to a private airstrip the airplane drifted left of the runway centerline. Before he could take corrective action, the airplane's left wing impacted trees adjacent to the airstrip. The airplane came to rest suspended nose down in the trees with substantial damage to the vertical stabilizer, rudder, and the left wing and its wing strut. A postaccident review of available weather data indicated the reported surface wind was calm-to-3 knots and of variable direction at the time of the accident.

The pilot stated that there were no preimpact mechanical malfunctions or failures that would have precluded normal operations.

## 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 trees during the landing approach.

## Findings

<b>Personnel issues</b>	Monitoring environment - Pilot
<b>Aircraft</b>	Altitude - Not attained/maintained
<b>Environmental issues</b>	Tree(s) - Contributed to outcome

## Factual Information

### History of Flight

Approach-VFR pattern final	Collision during takeoff/land (Defining event)
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### Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	71,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Rear
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	4-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 2 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	July 18, 2022
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	July 15, 2023
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 1817 hours (Total, all aircraft), 517 hours (Total, this make and model), 1583 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 5.4 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft)		

### Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N87965
Model/Series:	J3C-65	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1946	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	15583
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	April 2, 2023 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1440 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	21 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	1952 Hrs as of last inspection	Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	C91 installed, activated, aided in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	A-65-8
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	65 Horsepower
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual (VMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	ARB,839 ft msl	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	13 Nautical Miles
<b>Observation Time:</b>	11:53 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	189°
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Clear	<b>Visibility</b>	10 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	None	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	/	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	Unknown / Unknown
<b>Wind Direction:</b>		<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	Unknown / Unknown
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	29.93 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	2°C / -7°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	Canton, MI (1D2)	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	None
<b>Destination:</b>	South Lyon, MI (PVT)	<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>	11:15 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class G

## Airport Information

<b>Airport:</b>	Private PVT	<b>Runway Surface Type:</b>	Grass/turf
<b>Airport Elevation:</b>	910 ft msl	<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	Dry
<b>Runway Used:</b>	36	<b>IFR Approach:</b>	None
<b>Runway Length/Width:</b>	2000 ft / 55 ft	<b>VFR Approach/Landing:</b>	Stop and go;Traffic pattern

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 None	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	1 None	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	42.43291,-83.6933(est)

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Fox, Andrew
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	James D. Reif; Federal Aviation Administration - East Michigan FSDO; Detroit, MI
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	April 30, 2024
<b>Last Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Investigation Class:</b>	<a href="#">Class 4</a>
<b>Note:</b>	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	<a href="https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=193779">https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=193779</a>

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](#).