



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

<b>Location:</b>	Eatonville, Washington	<b>Accident Number:</b>	WPR23LA356
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	September 22, 2023, 16:00 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N7955H
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Piper PA-12	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>	Loss of control on ground	<b>Injuries:</b>	2 None
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

## Analysis

The pilot reported that while taking off in a tailwheel-equipped airplane, he experienced a wind gust that lifted the left wing upwards and caused the right wing to contact the runway. Subsequently, he lost directional control of the airplane, resulting in a ground loop and impact with a berm. The airplane sustained substantial damage to the right wing. The 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 directional control during the takeoff roll, in gusty wind conditions, which resulted in a runway excursion.

## Findings

<b>Environmental issues</b>	Gusts - Effect on equipment
<b>Personnel issues</b>	Aircraft control - Pilot
<b>Aircraft</b>	Directional control - Not attained/maintained

## Factual Information

### History of Flight

Takeoff	Other weather encounter
Takeoff	Loss of control on ground (Defining event)

### Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	71,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	3-point
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 3 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	March 11, 2022
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	October 18, 2022
Flight Time:	266.3 hours (Total, all aircraft), 23.3 hours (Total, this make and model), 212.8 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft)		

### Passenger Information

Certificate:	Age:
Airplane Rating(s):	Seat Occupied: Rear
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Restraint Used: Unknown
Instrument Rating(s):	Second Pilot Present: No
Instructor Rating(s):	Toxicology Performed:
Medical Certification:	Last FAA Medical Exam:
Occupational Pilot:	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:
Flight Time:	

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Piper	<b>Registration:</b>	N7955H
<b>Model/Series:</b>	PA-12	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Airplane
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>	1946	<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	12-858
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Tailwheel	<b>Seats:</b>	2
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	Annual	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	1750 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>		<b>Engines:</b>	1 Reciprocating
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	3108.45 Hrs at time of accident	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	LYCOMING
<b>ELT:</b>	C91A installed, not activated	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	O-235 SERIES
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	On file	<b>Rated Power:</b>	115 Horsepower
<b>Operator:</b>	On file	<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	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>	KPLU, 539 ft msl	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	14 Nautical Miles
<b>Observation Time:</b>	15:55 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	355°
<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>	/
<b>Wind Direction:</b>		<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	29.92 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	26°C / 6°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	Eatonville, WA	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	None
<b>Destination:</b>	Yelm, WA (49WA)	<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>		<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class G

## Airport Information

<b>Airport:</b>	Swanson Airport 2W3	<b>Runway Surface Type:</b>	
<b>Airport Elevation:</b>	843 ft msl	<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	Dry
<b>Runway Used:</b>	34	<b>IFR Approach:</b>	None
<b>Runway Length/Width:</b>	2990 ft / 36 ft	<b>VFR Approach/Landing:</b>	None

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 None	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>	1 None	<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>		<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	2 None	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	46.871667,-122.25722(est)

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Nixon, Albert
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	Mark Cherrix; Federal Aviation Administration; Seattle, WA
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	December 21, 2023
<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=193152">https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=193152</a>

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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](#).