



AVIATION



HIGHWAY



MARINE



RAILROAD



PIPELINE

Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Georgetown, Ohio	Accident Number:	ERA24LA212
Date & Time:	May 2, 2024, 19:30 Local	Registration:	N8290C
Aircraft:	Piper PA-20-135	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Aircraft wake turb encounter	Injuries:	1 Minor, 1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot reported that the purpose of the flight was to return to his home airport and that there was a military helicopter and another small single engine airplane in the traffic pattern. While the pilot was landing, the military helicopter was in a hover on the ramp adjacent to the runway. The pilot reported that the airplane touched down normally and that he had positive control of the airplane during the initial landing rollout with all wheels on the ground. Once the airplane passed abeam the helicopter, the pilot described that the airplane “levitated” off the ground in a nose high attitude and began to turn to the right. The pilot attempted to regain control of the airplane, but it continued to the right and departed the runway surface. During the runway excursion, the airplane sustained substantial damage to the fuselage. The pilot reported there were no mechanical failures or anomalies with the airplane that would have precluded normal operation. Based on this information, it is likely that during the landing roll, the airplane encountered the rotor wash of the hovering military helicopter that was adjacent to the runway.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

An inadvertent encounter with the rotor wash of a nearby hovering helicopter during landing, which resulted in a loss of control and a runway excursion.

Findings

Environmental issues	Wake turbulence - Effect on equipment
Personnel issues	Aircraft control - Pilot
Aircraft	Lateral/bank control - Attain/maintain not possible

Factual Information

History of Flight

Landing	Aircraft wake turb encounter (Defining event)
Landing	Loss of control on ground
Landing	Runway excursion

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	36,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Lap only
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:	March 18, 2022
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	July 14, 2022
Flight Time:	825 hours (Total, all aircraft), 120 hours (Total, this make and model), 613 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 6 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 3 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 0 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Passenger Information

Certificate:		Age:	6,Female
Airplane Rating(s):		Seat Occupied:	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):		Restraint Used:	Lap only
Instrument Rating(s):		Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):		Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:		Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:			

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N8290C
Model/Series:	PA-20-135	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1954	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	20-1119
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	November 10, 2023 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1950 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	6 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	2892 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-290-D2
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	135 Horsepower
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Dusk
Observation Facility, Elevation:	FGX,907 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	21 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	19:35 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	343°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	None / None
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	29.93 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	28°C / 13°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Columbus, OH (TZR)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Georgetown, OH	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	18:40 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	BROWN COUNTY GEO	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	957 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	18	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	3530 ft / 65 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Full stop

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Minor, 1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	38.882,-83.882667(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Gibson, Kurt
Additional Participating Persons:	Sharla Stanek; FAA/FSDO; Cincinnati, OH
Original Publish Date:	July 18, 2024
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=194226

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](#).