



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	Tallahassee, FL	Accident Number:	ERA09LA152
Date & Time:	02/01/2009, 1415 EST	Registration:	N2424A
Aircraft:	PIPER PA-18 -150	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Ground collision	Injuries:	2 Fatal, 2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot reported that he had previously performed a maneuver where a jeep and motorcycle would depart traveling down the runway, and he would then depart in the same direction and perform a low pass over them. On the day of the accident there was no briefing about the maneuver before the motorcycle, jeep, and he departed. The motorcycle departed first, followed by the jeep with two occupants, and finally the airplane. The pilot stated that he estimated he was flying at 75 mile-per-hour (mph) and the jeep was driving at 35 to 40 mph. He attempted to pass the right side of the jeep, but felt a bump and he knew he had hit the jeep. He also noticed the left wing navigation light was hanging down. He performed a 180-degree turn and landed on the runway, while the jeep veered off the runway and collided with trees. The pilot further reported there was no preimpact failure or malfunction with the flight controls. Toxicology testing performed on specimens obtained from the pilot after the accident was positive for 11-Nor 9 carboxy delta 9 tetrahydrocannabinol 8.1 ng/mL, and negative for ethyl alcohol. The finding of carboxy tetrahydrocannabinol was consistent with the pilot having used marijuana within the previous days or weeks but it cannot be concluded that the use was contributory to the accident.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's decision to initiate takeoff in close proximity to other vehicles which were operating on the runway resulting in collision with a vehicle during takeoff.

Findings

Personnel issues	Decision making/judgment - Pilot (Cause)
Environmental issues	Ground vehicle - Decision related to condition

Factual Information

HISTORY OF FLIGHT

On February 1, 2009, about 1415 eastern standard time, a Piper PA-18-150, N2424A, registered to Flightline Group, Inc., collided with a vehicle during takeoff from Ayavalla Field, near Tallahassee, Florida. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time and no flight plan was filed for the 14 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 91 personal, local flight from the private airstrip. The airplane was substantially damaged and the commercial-certificated pilot and one passenger in the airplane were not injured, while the two occupants of the vehicle were killed. The flight was originating at the time of the accident.

The pilot stated that before he began the takeoff roll, a dirt bike type motorcycle, then a jeep with the two occupants began driving down the runway in the same direction that he was departing. The runway orientation was later determined to be north/south. After becoming airborne he remained close to the runway and passed to the right side of the jeep. He felt a bump and knew he had impacted the jeep. He also noted that the left wing navigation light was hanging down. He performed a 180 degree turn and landed uneventfully to the east.

The pilot further stated that at the time of the collision he was flying at 75 mph, and estimated the jeep was traveling at 35 to 40 mph. There was no briefing before takeoff though they knew he was going to takeoff and he (the pilot) had seen the dirt bike and jeep depart before he applied power to takeoff. The pilot also reported that he had performed this same type of procedure many times in which the dirt bike and jeep would drive down the runway, and he would then depart in the same direction and fly low over them. He stated there were no preimpact failure or malfunction with the airplane or flight controls.

According to law enforcement personnel, following the collision the jeep veered to the left and impacted trees.

PERSONNEL INFORMATION

The pilot, age 54, holds an airline transport pilot certificate with a airplane multi-engine land rating, and a commercial pilot certificate with an airplane single engine land and single engine sea ratings. He also holds a private pilot certificate with a glider rating. He was issued a second class medical certificate on January 15, 2007, with a limitation to wear corrective lenses.

The rear seat occupant of the airplane does not hold any FAA issued pilot certificates.

AIRCRAFT INFORMATION

The airplane was manufactured in 1993 by Piper Aircraft, Inc., as model PA-18-150, and was designated serial number 1809075. The airplane was last inspected in accordance with an annual inspection on October 15, 2008.

METEOROLOGICAL INFORMATION

A surface observation weather report taken at Tallahassee Regional Airport, at 1353, or approximately 22 minutes before the accident indicates the wind was from 180 degrees at 11 knots, the visibility was 10 statute miles, scattered clouds existed at 4,300 feet, broken clouds existed at 7,000 feet, the temperature and dew point were 16 and 08 degrees Celsius respectively, and the altimeter setting was 30.19 inches of mercury.

AIRPORT INFORMATION

The private airstrip named Ayavalla Field has a single grass runway oriented north and south. The runway is 3,800 feet long and 300 feet wide. The pilot reported that the runway was dry at the time of the accident, and there were no restrictions to the visibility.

WRECKAGE AND IMPACT INFORMATION

Examination of the runway by representatives of Leon County Sheriff's Office revealed two parallel oriented tracks associated with the jeep's tires. The tracks were oriented along a southerly direction, and then begin an arcing left turn off the east side of the runway. The jeep came to rest upright near a pine tree which exhibited damage to the trunk near the base. A semi-circular indentation associated with tree contact was noted to the right side of the jeep's hood. The jeep exhibited greater damage to the right side. Further examination of the runway revealed the jeep's windshield came to rest before the parallel marks begin an arcing left turn. The airplane was stopped on the runway facing a southeasterly direction located about the midpoint of the arching turn.

Examination of the airplane by a representative of the airframe manufacturer with FAA oversight revealed damage to the leading edge of the left wing from just outboard of the landing light outboard to the wingtip. Fuselage tube deformity was noted at the wing root to fuselage attach point. Aileron, elevator, and rudder flight control continuity was confirmed from each respective control surface to the fore and aft control sticks.

MEDICAL AND PATHOLOGICAL INFORMATION

Postmortem examinations of the driver and passenger of the vehicle were performed by the District Two Medical Examiner's Office. The cause of death for the driver was listed as "Blunt traumatic injuries of head and neck", while the cause of death for the passenger was listed as "Blunt head trauma."

Forensic toxicology was performed on specimens of the pilot by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. The result was positive in the submitted blood specimen for 11-Nor 9 carboxy delta 9 tetrahydrocannabinol 8.1 ng/mL, and negative for ethyl alcohol.

Forensic toxicology was performed on specimens of the driver of the vehicle by the University of Florida Diagnostic Reference Laboratories. The results were negative in the submitted blood specimens for volatiles and a comprehensive drug screen, while an unquantified amount of Metoprolol was detected in the submitted urine specimen.

History of Flight

Takeoff	Ground collision (Defining event)
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Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline Transport; Commercial; Private	Age:	54, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land; Single-engine Sea	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Glider	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt, Shoulder harness
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 2 With Waivers/Limitations	Last Medical Exam:	01/15/2007
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	01/17/2008
Flight Time:	7000 hours (Total, all aircraft), 350 hours (Total, this make and model), 30 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 20 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Manufacturer:	PIPER	Registration:	N2424A
Model/Series:	PA-18 -150	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal; Utility	Serial Number:	1809075
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	10/15/2008, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1750 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	435 Hours	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-320
Registered Owner:	FLIGHTLINE GROUP INC	Rated Power:	150 hp
Operator:	FLIGHTLINE GROUP INC	Air Carrier Operating Certificate:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Observation Facility, Elevation:	TLH, 81 ft msl	Observation Time:	1353 EST
Distance from Accident Site:		Condition of Light:	Day
Direction from Accident Site:		Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 4300 ft agl	Temperature/Dew Point:	18° C / 8° C
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 7000 ft agl	Visibility	10 Miles
Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	11 knots, 180°	Visibility (RVR):	
Altimeter Setting:	30.19 inches Hg	Visibility (RVV):	
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Tallahassee, FL	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Tallahassee, FL	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	1415 EST	Type of Airspace:	

Airport Information

Airport:	Ayavalla Field	Runway Surface Type:	Grass/turf
Airport Elevation:	100 ft	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	18	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	3800 ft / 300 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	2 Fatal	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Fatal, 2 None		

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Timothy W Monville	Adopted Date:	11/09/2009
Additional Participating Persons:	James G McConnell; FAA/FSDO; Orlando, FL Ron Maynard; Piper Aircraft, Inc.; Vero Beach, FL		
Publish Date:	11/21/2009		
Investigation Docket:	NTSB accident and incident dockets serve as permanent archival information for the NTSB's investigations. Dockets released prior to June 1, 2009 are publicly available from the NTSB's Record Management Division at pubinq@ntsb.gov , or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/ .		

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