



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	Peyton, CO	Accident Number:	CEN12LA522
Date & Time:	08/01/2012, 1145 MDT	Registration:	N7808Z
Aircraft:	PIPER PA18	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Loss of control on ground	Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

After landing, the airplane's left wing contacted the ground during the taxi in gusting wind conditions, which resulted in damage to the left wing spar. The pilot completed the taxi to the tie-down area without further incident. The pilot stated that the accident could have been prevented if he had been more vigilant in watching and immediately correcting for any wind gusts that might upset the airplane.

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 airplane control during taxi in gusting wind conditions.

Findings

Aircraft	Performance/control parameters - Not attained/maintained (Cause)
Personnel issues	Aircraft control - Pilot (Cause)
Environmental issues	Gusts - Effect on equipment

Factual Information

On August 1, 2012, about 1145 mountain daylight time, a Piper PA-18-150, N7808Z, ground looped and impacted terrain during an after landing taxi at Meadow Lake Airport (FLY), Peyton, Colorado. The airline transport pilot was uninjured. The airplane sustained substantial damage to the left wing. The airplane was registered to and operated by High Flights Soaring Club Inc (HFSC) under the provisions of 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 as a glider tow flight. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the flight, which had not been operating on a flight plan. The local flight originated from FLY about 1000.

The pilot stated that before he towed anyone on any given day, he flew the tow airplane in the FLY traffic pattern and performed at least three simulated tow patterns and landings. On the day of the accident, the pilot was scheduled to be the on-duty tow pilot for HFSC. He performed several full-stop landings on runways 15 (6,000 feet by 60 feet, asphalt) and NS (1,800 feet by 15 feet, north 1,530 feet paved with asphalt) even though no one was scheduled to fly a sailplane. After his last full-stop landing, he cleared runway NS at mid-runway and taxied in a continuous sweeping right turn toward the northwest to the tie down area. About half-way through the right turn heading west, the airplane's right wing suddenly lifted upwards, which resulted in the left wing contacting the ground "in the blink of an eye" and before he could apply corrective control input. He did not see any airplane damage at first glance from the cockpit and continued the taxi to the tie down area without further incident.

Postflight inspection of the airplane by the pilot and a mechanic revealed that the fabric for the top left wing was wrinkled, and the left rear wing spar was bent.

The pilot stated that the accident could have been prevented if he had been more vigilant in watching and immediately correcting for any wind gust conditions that might upset the airplane during taxi. He said to always fly the airplane to the chocks, never relax.

History of Flight

Taxi	Other weather encounter
	Loss of control on ground (Defining event)
	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline Transport; Flight Instructor; Commercial; Flight Engineer	Age:	66, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Glider	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt, Shoulder harness
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane Multi-engine; Airplane Single-engine; Glider; Instrument Airplane	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 1 With Waivers/Limitations	Last Medical Exam:	05/18/2012
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	11/18/2011
Flight Time:	29235 hours (Total, all aircraft), 350 hours (Total, this make and model), 24625 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 146 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 20 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 0 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Manufacturer:	PIPER	Registration:	N7808Z
Model/Series:	PA18 150	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	18-8485
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	01/15/2012, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1750 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	7987 Hours	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-360-C2A
Registered Owner:	High Flights Soaring Club Inc	Rated Power:	180 hp
Operator:	High Flights Soaring Club Inc	Air Carrier Operating Certificate:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Observation Facility, Elevation:	FLY, 6874 ft msl	Observation Time:	1154 MDT
Distance from Accident Site:	0 Nautical Miles	Condition of Light:	Day
Direction from Accident Site:		Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Temperature/Dew Point:	30° C / 7° C
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility	10 Miles
Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	10 knots/ 14 knots, 70°	Visibility (RVR):	
Altimeter Setting:	30.28 inches Hg	Visibility (RVV):	
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Peyton, CO (FLY)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Peyton, CO (FLY)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	1000 MDT	Type of Airspace:	

Airport Information

Airport:	Meadow Lake Airport (FLY)	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt; Dirt; Gravel
Airport Elevation:	6874 ft	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	15R	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	1800 ft / 15 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Full Stop

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None		

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Mitchell F Gallo	Adopted Date:	07/29/2013
Additional Participating Persons:	John Wood; Federal Aviation Administration; Denver, CO		
Publish Date:	07/29/2013		
Investigation Docket:	http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/search/dockList.cfm?mKey=84588		

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