



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Preliminary Report

Location:	Huntsville, TX	Accident Number:	CEN16FA001
Date & Time:	10/02/2015, 1030 CST	Registration:	N3552K
Aircraft:	PIPER PA 28-140	Injuries:	1 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

On October 2, 2015, about 1030 central daylight time, a Piper PA-28-140, N3552K, collided with the terrain in Huntsville, Texas. The private pilot was fatally injured and the airplane was substantially damaged. The aircraft was registered to a private individual and was being operated by the pilot under the provisions of 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 as a personal flight. Visual flight rules conditions prevailed for the flight, which was not being operated on a flight plan. The flight originated from the Huntsville Municipal Airport (UTS) just prior to the accident.

According to airport personnel, the pilot was at the airport on the day prior to the accident and he replaced the battery in the airplane. On the day of the accident, the pilot taxied the airplane to the maintenance hangar where he put air in the nose tire. He told a mechanic who worked for the fixed base operator (FBO) that he was flying the airplane to Conroe, Texas, because someone there was interested in purchasing the airplane. The mechanic stated he commented to the pilot that the airplane had not been flown in a while and the pilot stated that he might fly around the area to make sure the airplane was alright before heading to Conroe. The mechanic stated he did not see the pilot taxi the airplane nor did he see the airplane takeoff. There are no known witnesses who saw the airplane takeoff.

The airplane owner, the pilot's brother-in-law, confirmed that the pilot replaced the airplane's battery on the day prior to the accident. He stated the pilot was going to check the radios, but was not supposed to fly the airplane. The owner also stated the airplane had not been flown recently nor had the pilot recently flown.

Around 1900 the pilot's family notified the Walker County Sheriff's Office that the pilot was missing. A search was initiated and the wreckage was located about 2130 on a law enforcement shooting range located just east of the airport.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Manufacturer:	PIPER	Registration:	N3552K
Model/Series:	PA 28-140	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Amateur Built:	No		
Operator:	JENSEN ROBERT E	Air Carrier Operating Certificate:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Observation Facility, Elevation:	UTS, 363 ft msl	Observation Time:	1553 UTC
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Conditions at Accident Site:	
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Temperature/Dew Point:	21 °C / 9 °C
Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	Light and Variable/ 14 knots, Variable	Visibility	10 Miles
Altimeter Setting:	30.06 inches Hg	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Departure Point:	Huntsville, TX (UTS)	Destination:	

Wreckage and Impact Information

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

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Pamela S Sullivan
Additional Participating Persons:	Casey Storm; FAA; Houston, TX Mike McClure; Piper Aircraft; Vero Beach, FL John Butler; Lycoming; Williamsport, PA
Note:	The NTSB traveled to the scene of this accident.