



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Dalhart, Texas	Accident Number:	CEN24LA208
Date & Time:	June 1, 2024, 13:55 Local	Registration:	N9715T
Aircraft:	Piper PA-38-112	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Miscellaneous/other	Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot reported that during the initial climb the airplane reached 300 ft agl and then began to sink. He made a shallow turn, committed to landing in a field, and then began shutting down the engine, fuel, and electrical systems. During landing in the rough field the landing gear collapsed and the airplane sustained substantial damage to the right wing, fuselage, and engine mount. The pilot reported that there were no preaccident mechanical malfunctions or failures with the airplane that would have precluded normal operation.

Based on information provided by the pilot, the airplane was roughly 100 lbs over the maximum allowable gross weight. The meteorological data for the date and time of the accident was used to calculate an estimated density altitude of 6,473 ft. Surface conditions showed a 20 knot direct headwind gusting to 30 knots for the runway being used and an outside air temperature of 29° Celsius. The performance chart for the airplane at maximum gross weight for these conditions showed a climb performance of about 400 feet per minute (fpm).

It is likely that the airplane, which was overweight and operating at a high-density altitude, had a lower climb performance.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

The pilot's improper decision to take off with the airplane over its maximum allowable gross weight at a high density altitude, which degraded its climb performance and led an off airport landing.

Findings

Personnel issues	Knowledge of meteorologic cond - Pilot
Personnel issues	Knowledge of equipment - Pilot
Aircraft	Climb rate - Not attained/maintained
Environmental issues	High density altitude - Effect on operation

Factual Information

History of Flight

Initial climb	Miscellaneous/other (Defining event)
Initial climb	Off-field or emergency landing

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	20,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
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 2 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	March 16, 2022
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	187.6 hours (Total, all aircraft), 84.1 hours (Total, this make and model), 135.6 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 55.5 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 36.7 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 6.5 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Passenger Information

Certificate:		Age:	Female
Airplane Rating(s):		Seat Occupied:	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):		Restraint Used:	3-point
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:	N9715T
Model/Series:	PA-38-112	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1978	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	38-78A0168
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	October 23, 2023 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1670 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	86.5 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	3619.7 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-235-L2C
Registered Owner:	EASY SMILES AND EXPENSIVE WATCHES LLC	Rated Power:	112 Horsepower
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KDHT, 3994 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	1 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	13:53 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	81°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	20 knots / 34 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	None / None
Wind Direction:	210°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	30.04 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	29°C / 9°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Dalhart, TX (DHT)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	VFR
Destination:	Albuquerque, NM (ABQ)	Type of Clearance:	VFR
Departure Time:	01:53 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class E

Airport Information

Airport:	DALHART MUNI DHT	Runway Surface Type:	Dirt;Grass/turf
Airport Elevation:	3991 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry;Rough;Vegetation
Runway Used:	21	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	5440 ft / 75 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Forced landing

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	2 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	36.01524,-102.5662

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Miller, Bradley
Additional Participating Persons:	Jason Wilson; FAA; Lubbock, TX
Original Publish Date:	September 27, 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=194369

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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](#).