



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Preliminary Report

Location:	Fellsmere, FL	Accident Number:	ERA19FA116
Date & Time:	03/05/2019, 0703 EST	Registration:	N556PU
Aircraft:	Piper PA28	Injuries:	1 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Instructional		

On March 5, 2019, at 0703 eastern standard time, a Piper PA-28-161, N556PU, was substantially damaged when it impacted trees and terrain near Fellsmere, Florida. The student pilot was fatally injured. The airplane was registered to and operated by FlightSafety International (FSI) Inc. under the provisions of Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91. Instrument meteorological conditions prevailed at the time of the accident. No flight plan was filed for the cross-country flight that departed Vero Beach Regional Airport (VRB), Vero Beach, Florida, about 0657, and destined for the Palm Beach County Glades Airport (PHK), Pahokee, Florida.

The student pilot had been training at FSI's FlightSafety Academy (FSA) in Vero Beach, Florida. She was conducting her second solo cross-country flight. The airport's control tower was not open at the time she departed, so the student pilot had to communicate her intentions via the airport's common traffic advisory frequency (CTAF). There were recorded radio transmissions documenting the student's departure.

A preliminary review of radar data revealed an airplane departed with a discreet transponder code from runway 30L. The airplane flew west before it made a series of left and right turns before the data ended about six minutes later. At that time, the airplane was in a right turn at an approximate altitude of 550 ft, at a ground speed of 117 knots, and on a heading of 153°.

The airplane was located a quarter-mile south of the last radar return in heavily wooded farm land about 7 miles northwest of VRB. The initial impact point was an approximately 30-foot-tall tree. The airplane continued to impact trees as it descended before it came to rest on its right side on a magnetic heading of 115°, about 460 ft from the initial impact point. An on-scene examination of the wreckage revealed that all major components of the airplane were located at the accident site and there was no post-impact fire.

The pilot held a student pilot certificate issued on May 15, 2018. Her last Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) first-class medical was issued on April 8, 2018, with no limitations. A review of the student pilot's logbook revealed she had accrued a total of 96.1 flight hours, of which, 1.4 hours were simulated instrument.

Under Federal Aviation Regulation 61.93c3, a flight instructor is required to endorse the student pilot's logbook for each solo cross-country flight. A review of the endorsements section of the student pilot's logbook revealed she was not endorsed by her instructor for the flight on the day of the accident. She had been endorsed by her flight instructor the day before the accident on March 4, 2019. According to flight instructor, the student was scheduled to complete this cross-country the day before the accident. The instructor had met with the student pilot and reviewed the weather conditions, the navigation log, and her flight planning. She then endorsed the student for that flight; however, the flight was cancelled at the last minute due to weather. The instructor then requested for the student to have a block of time in the afternoon the following day to complete the cross-country flight. FSA's scheduling department was unable to book the flight for the afternoon and it was scheduled for 0600 the following morning. The instructor knew there was a high probability that the flight would not take place due to weather. When she did not hear from the student pilot the following morning, the instructor thought the flight had been cancelled due to weather. The instructor stated that the student pilot was aware that she needed to obtain her instructor's endorsements before she could be released for the flight.

At 0553 weather reported at VRB was wind from 230° 4 knots, visibility 10 miles, light rain, scattered clouds 2,700 ft, broken clouds 10,000 ft, temperature 18° C, dewpoint 17° degrees C, with an altimeter setting of 30.00 in Hg.

At 0631 the wind was 260° at 6 knots, visibility 10 miles, light rain, few clouds at 600, broken clouds at 1,900 ft, broken clouds at 4,800 ft, temperature 19° C, dewpoint 17° C, and an altimeter setting of 30.02 in Hg.

At 0645, the wind was 270° at 7 knots, visibility 9 miles, light rain, broken clouds at 500 ft, broken clouds at 1,900 ft, overcast clouds at 4,800 ft, temperature 19° C, dewpoint 18° C, and an altimeter setting of 30.03 in Hg.

At 0653, the wind was 270° at 7 knots, visibility 8 miles, light rain, broken clouds 500 ft, overcast clouds at 1,900 ft, temperature 19° C, dewpoint 18° C, and an altimeter setting of 30.03 in Hg.

At 0703, the wind was 250 degrees at 8 knots, visibility 6 miles, light rain, mist, overcast clouds at 400 ft, temperature 19° C, dewpoint 18° C, and an altimeter setting of 30.03 in Hg.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N556PU
Model/Series:	PA28 161	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Amateur Built:	No		
Operator:	Flightsafety International Inc	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	Pilot School (141)

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	VRB, 23 ft msl	Observation Time:	0703 EST
Distance from Accident Site:	7 Nautical Miles	Temperature/Dew Point:	19° C / 18° C
Lowest Cloud Condition:		Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	8 knots / , 250°
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 400 ft agl	Visibility:	6 Miles
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Departure Point:	Vero Beach, FL (VRB)	Destination:	Pahokee, FL (PHK)

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	Latitude, Longitude:	27.715000, -80.527222

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Leah D Read
Additional Participating Persons:	Larry Penland; FAA/FSDO; Orlando, FL Damien Galbraith; Piper Aircraft Company; Vero Beach, FL David Harsanyi; Lycoming; Williamsport, PA
Note:	The NTSB traveled to the scene of this accident.