



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Preliminary Report

Location:	Floral City, FL	Accident Number:	ERA20LA330
Date & Time:	September 23, 2020, 07:50 Local	Registration:	N6106Z
Aircraft:	Piper PA25	Injuries:	1 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 137: Agricultural		

On September 23, 2020, about 0750 eastern daylight time, a Piper PA-25 airplane, N6106Z, was destroyed when it was involved in accident in Floral City, Florida. The pilot was fatally injured. The airplane was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 137 aerial application flight.

According to a solo student pilot who was in the traffic pattern at the nearby Inverness Airport (INF), Inverness, Florida, while turning right downwind for runway 01, he glanced down and saw that the accident airplane was “spraying” and “it looked to me like he pitched up to clear something and then abruptly went down.” The student pilot subsequently observed fire and smoke emanating from where he last saw the airplane.

An additional witness was located on a tractor in a nearby farm field. He reported that he observed the accident airplane spraying from west to east and it had “dipped down two times, coming down near the trees and then coming back up.” He then observed the airplane on its third approach, and it was “real low” and he “never saw him [the airplane] come back up.” He subsequently observed black smoke and heard explosions.

According to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) airman records, the pilot held a commercial pilot certificate with ratings for airplane single and multi-engine land, instrument airplane, rotorcraft helicopter and gyroplane, and glider. He also held a flight instructor and mechanic certificates. The pilot was issued an FAA second-class medical certificate April 13, 2020, where he reported a total of 31,100 hours of flight time and 125 hours in the preceding 6 months.

According to an FAA inspector who traveled to the accident site, the main wreckage was located inverted in a row of trees that lined the field the airplane was seeding. A postcrash fire consumed a majority of the fuselage; however, all primary flight controls were present with the main wreckage. He further reported that within the field that was being sprayed, about 350 ft directly west of the main wreckage, a large dead tree with vegetation growth contained broken branches and components of the agricultural spraying equipment near its base.

Figure 1 provides a view of the dead tree and the spraying equipment that was found about 25 ft east of the tree. An additional photo in the figure shows where the agriculture equipment was likely mounted on the accident airplane (*Source of photograph, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA)*).



Figure 1: View of the dead tree in the field being sprayed, with accompanied photographs of the agriculture spraying equipment located in the field.

Figure 2 provides an overview of the field being sprayed, the accident site area, and the reported flight path direction.



Figure 2: Overview of the accident site area.

The wreckage was retained for further examination.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N6106Z
Model/Series:	PA25	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Amateur Built:	No		
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	Agricultural aircraft (137)
Operator Designator Code:			

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	VMC	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KINF, 63 ft msl	Observation Time:	07:55 Local
Distance from Accident Site:	2 Nautical Miles	Temperature/Dew Point:	18° C / 18° C
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	/ ,
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility:	10 miles
Altimeter Setting:	30.06 inches Hg	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	
Departure Point:	Floral City, FL	Destination:	Floral City, FL

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	On-ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	On-ground
Total Injuries:	1 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	28.771699, -82.311861

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Gerhardt, Adam
Additional Participating Persons:	Tim S. Annis; FAA/ FSDO; Tampa, FL Mike Childers; Lycoming; Williamsport, PA
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.