



Aviation Investigation Preliminary Report

Location:	Pahokee, FL	Accident Number:	ERA25LA072
Date & Time:	December 9, 2024, 16:30 Local	Registration:	N90874 (A1); N497SJ (A2)
Aircraft:	Piper PA28 (A1); Cessna 172 (A2)	Injuries:	2 None (A1); 3 None (A2)
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Instructional (A1); Part 91: General aviation - Instructional (A2)		

On December 9, 2024, about 1630 eastern standard time, a Piper PA-28-181, N90874, and a Cessna 172S, N497SJ, were substantially damaged when they were involved in a midair collision near Pahokee, Florida. The flight instructor and student pilot in the Piper were not injured. The flight instructor, private pilot receiving instruction, and student pilot observer in the Cessna were also not injured. The airplanes were operated as Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91 instructional flights.

Both airplanes had previously completed multiple landings uneventfully on runway 18 at Palm Beach County Glades Airport (PHK), Pahokee, Florida. The flight instructor in the Piper reported that during final approach for a third landing, about 300 to 350 ft above ground level, he heard a “crunching metal noise” and realized another airplane had collided with the cabin roof from above. He was able to continue and land on the runway. The flight instructor added that he had been making radio transmission position reports in the traffic pattern. He remembered a pilot in the Cessna making a “short approach” report during their previous circuit, but he did not hear anything during the accident circuit.

The private pilot and flight instructor in the Cessna reported that they had completed one full-stop and two touch-and-go landings. During the fourth approach, the student pilot in the rear seat yelled as he saw “something big” on the left side of the airplane. The private pilot pulled back on the control yoke, but it was too late as contact was already made. The flight instructor took over control and landed uneventfully. The private pilot and flight instructor also stated that they had made radio transmission position reports during all four approaches. They heard a transmission from a different airplane on the ground at PHK, but never heard from another airplane in the traffic pattern.

Examination of the airplanes by a Federal Aviation Administration inspector revealed substantial damage to the cabin roof fuselage of the Piper and the outboard left wing of the Cessna.

Review of automatic dependent surveillance-broadcast (ADS-B) data revealed that the Piper flew a wider left traffic pattern, and the Cessna flew a tighter left traffic pattern, before they converged on short-final approach.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information (A1)

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N90874
Model/Series:	PA28 181	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Amateur Built:			
Operator:	SkyBlue Aviation	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Designator Code:			

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information (A2)

Aircraft Make:	Cessna	Registration:	N497SJ
Model/Series:	172 S	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Amateur Built:			
Operator:	FXE FLIGHTCENTER CORP	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	Pilot school (141)
Operator Designator Code:			

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	VMC	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	2IS,16 ft msl	Observation Time:	16:35 Local
Distance from Accident Site:	20 Nautical Miles	Temperature/Dew Point:	26°C /15°C
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	8 knots / , 140°
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility:	10 miles
Altimeter Setting:	30.1 inches Hg	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	
Departure Point:		Destination:	

Wreckage and Impact Information (A1)

Crew Injuries:	2 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	26.795833,-80.6945

Wreckage and Impact Information (A2)

Crew Injuries:	2 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	3 None	Latitude, Longitude:	26.795833,-80.6945

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Gretz, Robert
Additional Participating Persons:	Robert Perez; FAA/FSDO; Miramar, FL
Investigation Class:	Class 3
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.