



# Aviation Investigation Preliminary Report

<b>Location:</b>	Suffolk, VA	<b>Accident Number:</b>	ERA23FA103
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	January 7, 2023, 12:13 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N592FL
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Piper PA28	<b>Injuries:</b>	2 Fatal
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

On January 7, about 1213 eastern standard time, a Piper PA-28-140, N592FL, was destroyed when it was involved in an accident near Suffolk, Virginia. The pilot and passenger were fatally injured. The airplane was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91 personal flight.

The pilot received his private pilot certificate on November 29, 2022. He owned the airplane and based it at the departure airport, Northeast Regional Airport (EDE), Edenton, North Carolina.

According to a mechanic at EDE, the pilot contacted him on January 1, 2023, to inform him that the rpm drop was excessive during a magneto check and that he had parked the airplane in front of the mechanic’s hangar for further evaluation. The mechanic looked at the airplane on January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023. He removed the spark plugs, cleaned them, and checked for resistance. He found that two spark plugs had very high resistance and one spark plug fired a little weak. The mechanic replaced those three spark plugs and reinstalled the five other spark plugs in the engine.

The pilot arrived later that day, before the mechanic had a chance to perform a ground engine run as he was busy working on another airplane. The pilot asked if he could perform a ground run of the engine and the mechanic said yes, because he could listen to the engine from his hangar. As soon as the pilot ran the engine, the mechanic knew “right away” that the new spark plugs did not correct the problem as the engine was “skipping.” The pilot shut down the engine and the mechanic informed the pilot that the airplane was not to be flown until he could investigate further, and he would most likely be able to do so on Monday January 9, 2023. At the time of the accident, the airplane had not been released from maintenance as the mechanic had not had an opportunity to further investigate the engine anomaly.

According to family members, the accident flight was a short (40 nautical miles) cross-country flight to get lunch at a restaurant at Suffolk Executive Airport (SFQ), Suffolk, Virginia.

According to preliminary ADS-B flight track information from the Federal Aviation Administration, shortly before the accident the airplane approached SFQ, in cruise flight at an altitude of about 1,000 ft msl, and about 5 miles south of the airport. The airplane then descended rapidly and impacted terrain. A witness reported that she was a front seat passenger in a car and first observed the airplane in a nosedive. At that time, there were two spiral trails of black smoke, about 5 to 10 ft behind the airplane; however, she did not observe any fire from the airplane.

The airplane impacted nose-down in a marshy field and no debris path was observed. The wreckage came to rest upright and was oriented south. A section of engine cowling was located about 50 ft south of the main wreckage. A postcrash fire consumed the majority of the wreckage, with the exception of the wings and engine. The engine was buried in approximately 3 ft of mud and further examination of the wreckage was planned following its recovery from the field.

### Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Piper	<b>Registration:</b>	N592FL
<b>Model/Series:</b>	PA28 140	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Airplane
<b>Amateur Built:</b>			
<b>Operator:</b>	On file	<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None
<b>Operator Designator Code:</b>			

### Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	VMC	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	SFQ,70 ft msl	<b>Observation Time:</b>	12:15 Local
<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	5 Nautical Miles	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	9°C /0°C
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Clear	<b>Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:</b>	6 knots / , 240°
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	None	<b>Visibility:</b>	10 miles
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	30.26 inches Hg	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	None
<b>Departure Point:</b>	Edenton, NC (EDE)	<b>Destination:</b>	Suffolk, VA (SFQ)

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Destroyed
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal	<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	On-ground
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	2 Fatal	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	36.602222,-76.598056

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Gretz, Robert
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	Jay Venerable; FAA/FSDO; Richmond, VA Ryan Enders; Lycoming Engines; Williamsport, PA Jonathan Hirsch; Piper Aircraft; Vero Beach, FL
<b>Note:</b>	