



**Australian Government**

**Australian Transport Safety Bureau**

# Runway excursion involving Piper PA-28, VH-SFK

Bankstown Airport, New South Wales, 4 September 2012

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**Postal address:** PO Box 967, Civic Square ACT 2608  
**Office:** 62 Northbourne Avenue Canberra, Australian Capital Territory 2601  
**Telephone:** 1800 020 616, from overseas +61 2 6257 4150  
Accident and incident notification: 1800 011 034 (24 hours)  
**Facsimile:** 02 6247 3117, from overseas +61 2 6247 3117  
**Email:** [atsbinfo@atsb.gov.au](mailto:atsbinfo@atsb.gov.au)  
**Internet:** [www.atsb.gov.au](http://www.atsb.gov.au)

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# Runway excursion involving Piper PA-28, VH-SFK

AO-2012-113

## What happened

On 4 September 2012, the pilot of a Piper PA-28 aircraft, registered VH-SFK (SFK), was conducting solo touch-and-go<sup>1</sup> circuits at Bankstown Airport, New South Wales. The pilot had completed several circuits with a flight instructor before commencing solo circuits.

When on the final leg of the fourth solo circuit, the pilot conducted his pre-landing checks and prepared the aircraft for landing. He reported that the approach and landing were normal.

After landing, when the pilot applied full power for take-off, SFK veered suddenly to the left onto the grass. The pilot reduced the throttle setting to the idle position and applied the brakes, however the aircraft collided with the airport perimeter fence. The pilot shut down the aircraft and exited. The aircraft sustained substantial damage (Figure 1) and the pilot sustained minor injuries.

The pilot reported that, prior to take-off, the park brake was difficult to release and required several attempts before the brakes released.

## Aircraft inspection

The aircraft operator visually inspected the aircraft and noted there was no evidence of an aircraft unserviceability. The operator also inspected the runway, which appeared to show that the left brake had been applied during the landing.

**Figure 1: Aircraft damage**



Source: Aircraft operator

<sup>1</sup> A touch-and-go is a practice landing whereby the aircraft is permitted to touch the runway briefly, without braking before taking off again.

## Aircraft details

Manufacturer and model:	Piper Aircraft Corporation PA-28-161	
Registration:	VH-SFK	
Type of operation:	Flying training	
Location:	Bankstown Airport, New South Wales	
Occurrence type:	Runway excursion	
Persons on board:	Crew – 1	Passengers – Nil
Injuries:	Crew – Minor	Passengers – Nil
Damage:	Substantial	

## About the ATSB

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) is an independent Commonwealth Government statutory agency. The Bureau is governed by a Commission and is entirely separate from transport regulators, policy makers and service providers. The ATSB's function is to improve safety and public confidence in the aviation, marine and rail modes of transport through excellence in: independent investigation of transport accidents and other safety occurrences; safety data recording, analysis and research; and fostering safety awareness, knowledge and action.

The ATSB is responsible for investigating accidents and other transport safety matters involving civil aviation, marine and rail operations in Australia that fall within Commonwealth jurisdiction, as well as participating in overseas investigations involving Australian registered aircraft and ships. A primary concern is the safety of commercial transport, with particular regard to fare-paying passenger operations.

The ATSB performs its functions in accordance with the provisions of the *Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003* and Regulations and, where applicable, relevant international agreements.

The object of a safety investigation is to identify and reduce safety-related risk. ATSB investigations determine and communicate the safety factors related to the transport safety matter being investigated.

It is not a function of the ATSB to apportion blame or determine liability. At the same time, an investigation report must include factual material of sufficient weight to support the analysis and findings. At all times the ATSB endeavours to balance the use of material that could imply adverse comment with the need to properly explain what happened, and why, in a fair and unbiased manner.

## About this report

Decisions regarding whether to conduct an investigation, and the scope of an investigation, are based on many factors, including the level of safety benefit likely to be obtained from an investigation. For this occurrence, a limited-scope, fact-gathering investigation was conducted in order to produce a short summary report, and allow for greater industry awareness of potential safety issues and possible safety actions.