

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report  
199603414**

**Piper Aircraft Corp  
Pawnee**

**23 October 1996**

Readers are advised that the Australian Transport Safety Bureau investigates for the sole purpose of enhancing transport safety. Consequently, Bureau reports are confined to matters of safety significance and may be misleading if used for any other purposes.

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**NOTE: All air safety occurrences reported to the ATSB are categorised and recorded. For a detailed explanation on Category definitions please refer to the ATSB website at [www.atsb.gov.au](http://www.atsb.gov.au).**

The Bureau did not conduct an on scene investigation of this occurrence. The information presented below was obtained from information supplied to the Bureau.

**Occurrence Number:** 199603414      **Occurrence Type:** Accident  
**Location:** 16km S Ardlethan, (ALA)  
**State:** NSW      **Inv Category:** 4  
**Date:** Wednesday 23 October 1996  
**Time:** 1400 hours      **Time Zone** EST  
**Highest Injury Level:** None

**Aircraft Manufacturer:** Piper Aircraft Corp  
**Aircraft Model:** PA-25-235  
**Aircraft Registration:** VH-ALD      **Serial Number:** 25-7405558  
**Type of Operation:** Commercial    Aerial Agriculture - Other  
**Damage to Aircraft:** Substantial  
**Departure Point:** Ardlethan NSW  
**Departure Time:** 1400 EST  
**Destination:** Ardlethan NSW

**Crew Details:**

Role	Class of Licence	Hours on	
		Type	Hours Total
Pilot-In-Command	Commercial	150.0	15500

**Approved for Release:** Tuesday, January 21, 1997

The Piper Pawnee aircraft was conducting spraying operations on a property. The land owner had provided a map of the treatment area and the pilot had conducted an in-flight inspection. Spray runs were to be conducted at right angles to a powerline running along the boundary of the area to be treated, with the aircraft climbing over the powerline before carrying out a procedure turn and descending to commence another run.

The aircraft was fitted with a Global Positioning System (GPS) to provide track guidance to the pilot during the spray runs. The pilot reported that during the initial spray runs his attention was drawn to the GPS Marking System due to alignment errors. Following the procedure turn after the fifth spray run, the pilot reported he momentarily forgot about the presence of the powerline and descended into it. The landing gear snagged the wire, causing the aircraft to lose airspeed and strike the ground in an almost level attitude. The left wing and fuselage were damaged during the ensuing ground run. The pilot, who was wearing a full harness, was unhurt. An Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT) was not fitted to the aircraft.