

No: 11/89

Ref: EW/G89/09/09

Category: 1b

Aircraft Type and Registration: Piper PA-31, G-DCOX

No & Type of Engines: 2 Lycoming TIO-540-A2C piston engines

Year of Manufacture: 1978

Date and Time (UTC): 28 September 1989 at 1330 hrs

Location: West Freugh, Wigtownshire

Type of Flight: Air Taxi

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 Passengers - 4

Injuries: Crew - None Passengers - None

Nature of Damage: Substantial to right propeller and tailplane

Commander's Licence: Airline Transport Pilot's Licence with Full Instructor Rating

Commander's Age: 44 years

Commander's Total Flying Experience: 2,880 hours (of which 124 were on type)

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and telephone enquiries to MOD (PE)

On arrival at West Freugh, the pilot notified his departure time to the ground handling party in UTC but this was interpreted as Local Time. Consequently when the pilot arrived at his aircraft there were no ground crew present. During his pre-flight checks the pilot saw a fire extinguisher close on the right hand side of his aircraft but judged it to be no hazard. Having boarded his passengers, he called for start clearance anticipating that this would prompt ATC to dispatch a marshaller to his aircraft. By the time the pilot received taxi clearance, there was still no marshaller present. Shortly after releasing the brakes, the pilot initiated a turn to the right and the right hand propeller struck the fire extinguisher which the pilot states was not visible from the flight deck.

The authorities at West Freugh are amending their procedures to ensure that all aircraft have ground crew present for departure.