Aviation Investigation Preliminary Report

Location:	Benton Harbor, MI	**Accident Number:**	CEN26LA052
Date & Time:	November 26, 2025, 09:20 Local	**Registration:**	C-FGEW
Aircraft:	Gray RG12	**Injuries:**	2 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Ferry		

On November 26, 2025, at 0920 eastern standard time, a RG12 airplane, C-FGEW, sustained substantial damage when it was involved in an accident near Benton Harbor, Michigan. The pilot and a passenger sustained minor injuries. The airplane was operated under Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* as a Part 91 ferry flight.

The airplane was an experimental amateur-built replica of a Piper PA-12 that was being ferried by the pilot to the new airplane owner. About 10 minutes after the flight departed from Dowagiac Municipal Airport, Dowagiac, Michigan, an airframe vibration/flutter ensued. The vibration rapidly increased in severity despite changes in the airplane's airspeed and engine power setting. During the flight, the ailerons contacted their mechanical stops, the horizontal stabilizer moved up and down vigorously, and the control stick was forced toward all corners of its travel range. The pilot decided to divert the flight to Southwest Lakes Airpark, Sawyer, Michigan, which had only one turf runway. After overflying the airstrip, the pilot decided it would be unsafe to attempt a landing due to the control issues and then flew to Southwest Michigan Regional Airport, Benton Harbor, Michigan, where he attempted a landing on runway 28 with winds from 240° at 27 knots gusting to 43 knots. The pilot stated that he was unable to obtain the latest wind information using his handheld radio because he was managing the control difficulties that were being experienced. The pilot stated that during landing, the airplane touched down on the main landing gear wheels, and he used full flight control inputs to counteract wind effects. During landing roll, the airplane veered right, the right wing contacted the runway, and the airplane nosed over. The airplane sustained substantial damage to the vertical stabilizer/rudder on impact with the runway surface.

Postaccident examination of the airplane revealed that the right wing drag and anti-drag wires were attached but found loose. Flight control continuity was established to all the flight controls.

This information is preliminary and subject to change.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Gray	**Registration:**	C-FGEW
Model/Series:	RG12	**Aircraft Category:**	Airplane
Amateur Built:	Yes		
Operator:	On file	**Operating Certificate(s) Held:**	None
Operator Designator Code:			

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	VMC	**Condition of Light:**	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	BEH	**Observation Time:**	09:53 Local
Distance from Accident Site:	0 Nautical Miles	**Temperature/Dew Point:**	2°C /-1°C
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear / 2500 ft AGL	**Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:**	27 knots / 43 knots, 240°
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast	**Visibility:**	5 miles
Altimeter Setting:	29.69 inches Hg	**Type of Flight Plan Filed:**	VFR
Departure Point:	Dowagiac, MI (C91)	**Destination:**	Bloomington, IL (BMI)

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Minor	**Aircraft Fire:**	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	**Aircraft Explosion:**	None
Total Injuries:	2 Minor	**Latitude, Longitude:**	42.127828,-86.428749 (est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Gallo, Mitchell
Additional Participating Persons:	Cody R Rambo; FAA FSDO; Grand Rapids, MI
Investigation Class:	Class 3
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.

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