



Aviation Investigation Preliminary Report

Location:	Gibbon, NE	Accident Number:	CEN23FA220
Date & Time:	June 2, 2023, 09:07 Local	Registration:	N977RV
Aircraft:	Vans RV7	Injuries:	1 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

On June 2, 2023, at about 0907 Central Daylight Time, a Vans RV-7, N977RV, was destroyed when it was involved in an accident in Gibbon, Nebraska. The pilot was fatally injured. The airplane was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91 personal flight.

Automatic Dependent Surveillance – Broadcast (ADS-B) data revealed that the airplane departed Rocky Mountain Metropolitan Airport (BJC), Denver, Colorado, at 0610 and proceeded direct toward Red Oak Municipal Airport (RDK), Red Oak, Iowa. The pilot filed an instrument flight plan. About two hours after departure from BJC, at an altitude of 15,000 ft mean sea level (msl), the pilot requested a lower altitude from air traffic control (ATC) due to encountering ice. The controller gave the pilot a block altitude between 11,000 and 15,000 ft msl, and the pilot began a descent. Shortly after the pilot began his descent, the controller advised him that there was “extreme precipitation” in the area. About one minute later, the controller told the pilot that he was permitted a lower altitude if he wished to continue to descend. There was no further response from the pilot.

Dashboard camera footage from a car traveling east bound on Interstate 80, captured the airplane descending in a nose-down attitude. The airplane impacted an open grassy area surrounded by trees about 260 ft south of the interstate. The debris field was generally aligned on a 257° heading, and the main wreckage came to rest upright. Ground scaring at the accident site confirmed that the airplane was in a nose-down attitude when it struck the ground. The initial impact point consisted of a two-foot deep crater with the propeller embedded in it. The propeller was still intact at the hub; however, it was separated from the engine flange.

The dashboard board camera footage also revealed that it was raining heavily at the time of the accident with a low overcast cloud layer. Weather radar images at the time of the accident depicted heavy precipitation and thunderstorms in the vicinity.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Vans	Registration:	N977RV
Model/Series:	RV7	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Amateur Built:	Yes		
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Designator Code:	None		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	IMC	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KEAR,2130 ft msl	Observation Time:	09:19 Local
Distance from Accident Site:	6 Nautical Miles	Temperature/Dew Point:	17°C /16°C
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 2000 ft AGL	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	11 knots / None, 120°
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 2700 ft AGL	Visibility:	0.5 miles
Altimeter Setting:	30.02 inches Hg	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	IFR
Departure Point:	Broomfield, CO (BJC)	Destination:	Red Oak, IA (RDK)

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	40.693375,-98.876512

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Abraham, Laura
Additional Participating Persons:	Brandon Bennett; FAA; Lincoln, NE
Investigation Class:	Class 3
Note:	