



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Chattanooga, Tennessee	Accident Number:	ERA23LA314
Date & Time:	July 26, 2023, 14:00 UTC	Registration:	N62GH
Aircraft:	Mooney M20R	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Collision during takeoff/land	Injuries:	2 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Instructional		

Analysis

The pilot and the flight instructor were climbing out after departing from the airport when the cabin door suddenly opened. The flight instructor tried to close the door but could not get it closed properly. The pilot subsequently returned to the airport to land. During the landing approach, the pilot was distracted, flew too low, and the airplane contacted several approach lights short of the runway threshold. The airplane sustained substantial damage to the wings and empennage. The pilot reported that there were no preimpact mechanical malfunctions or failures with the airplane that would have precluded normal operation.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

The pilot’s failure to maintain the proper glidepath during final approach, which resulted in a collision with the approach lights short of the runway. Contributing was the pilot’s distraction due to the cabin door opening.

Findings

Aircraft	Descent/approach/glide path - Not attained/maintained
Personnel issues	Task monitoring/vigilance - Pilot

Factual Information

History of Flight

Landing	Collision during takeoff/land (Defining event)
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Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	72, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	3-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 3 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	May 10, 2023
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	September 30, 2022
Flight Time:	1100 hours (Total, all aircraft), 20 hours (Total, this make and model)		

Flight instructor Information

Certificate:	Commercial; Flight instructor	Age:	80, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	3-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane multi-engine; Airplane single-engine	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 2 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	September 12, 2022
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	June 12, 2023
Flight Time:	8141 hours (Total, all aircraft), 591 hours (Total, this make and model), 7938 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 39 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 21 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 0 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Mooney	Registration:	N62GH
Model/Series:	M20R	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1999	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	29-0190
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	July 11, 2023 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3368 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	1509 Hrs as of last inspection	Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	IO-550
Registered Owner:	MOONEY 62GH LLC	Rated Power:	200
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	CHA,688 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	0 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	09:53 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	145°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 12000 ft AGL	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:		Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	None / None
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	30.18 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	27°C / 22°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Chattanooga, TN	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Chattanooga, TN	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:		Type of Airspace:	Class D

Airport Information

Airport:	LOVELL FLD CHA	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	682 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	20	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	7400 ft / 150 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Precautionary landing

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	2 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	35.036704,-85.202306

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Boggs, Daniel
Additional Participating Persons:	Matt Torress; FAA/FSDO; Nashville, TN
Original Publish Date:	October 5, 2023
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 4
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=192723

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The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person” (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available [here](#).