



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Somerville, New Jersey	Accident Number:	NYC04LA213
Date & Time:	September 15, 2004, 09:06 Local	Registration:	N29BF
Aircraft:	Cessna 185F	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

Upon touching down on the runway, the airplane veered off the left side of the runway, struck a parked airplane, and continued into a hangar. Inside the hangar, the accident airplane struck another parked airplane, before coming to a stop. After the accident, state authorities arrested the pilot, and found a supply of prescription sedative medication in the airplane. Examination of the airplane did not reveal any mechanical abnormalities with the airframe, landing gear assembly, or the engine. Review of the pilot's medical records by the NTSB Medical Officer revealed that on the pilot's most recent application for second-class airman medical certificate, the pilot indicated "Yes" in response to the question about "Substance dependence" and "Alcohol dependence or abuse." Under "Comments on History and Findings" the pilot stated, "...involved in airplane crash. Substance abuse involved..."

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 aircraft control while landing. A factor was the pilot's impairment due to the influence of non-prescribed pain medication.

Findings

Occurrence #1: ON GROUND/WATER COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: LANDING - ROLL

Findings

1. OBJECT - HANGAR/AIRPORT BUILDING
2. (C) AIRCRAFT CONTROL - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) IMPAIRMENT(DRUGS) - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. OBJECT - AIRCRAFT PARKED/STANDING

Factual Information

On September 15, 2004, at 0906 eastern daylight time, a Cessna 185F, N29BF, was substantially damaged while landing at the Somerset Airport (SMQ), Somerville, New Jersey. The certificated commercial pilot received minor injuries. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and no flight plan was filed for the flight that originated at the Hartford Brainard Airport (HFD), Hartford, Connecticut. The personal flight was conducted under 14 CFR Part 91.

According to the pilot, upon touching down on runway 30, a 2,733-foot-long, 65-foot-wide asphalt runway, the left front float landing gear assembly "snapped," causing the left float to make contact with the runway. The airplane then veered off the left side of the runway, struck a parked airplane, and continued into a hangar. Inside the hangar, the accident airplane struck another parked airplane, before coming to rest.

Examination of the accident airplane wreckage by a Federal Aviation Administration inspector did not reveal any mechanical abnormalities with the airframe, landing gear assembly, or the engine. The inspector also did not note any debris from the airplane on the runway, nor did he observe any scars on the runway surface.

According to a witness, he observed the accident airplane approach the airport from the southeast. The airplane's altitude was about 500 feet above the ground, and the engine was at full power. The airplane then flew over the airport, and made a left turn to enter the traffic pattern for runway 30. The witness then lost sight of the airplane as it past behind hangars. He regained sight of the airplane as it flew northeast of runway 30, and it appeared to have overshot the extended centerline of the runway. The engine sounded as though its power was reduced to idle, and the airplane touched down on the east end of runway 30. After touching down, the airplane's engine increased to full power, and the airplane again disappeared from the witnesses view. Moments later, he heard the airplane impact a hangar. The witness ran to the airplane, forced the pilot's door open, and the pilot egressed from the airplane on his own power.

The witness added that after the accident, the pilot appeared unable to walk, and required assistance to stand.

The winds reported at SMQ, about the time of the accident, were from 050 degrees at 5 knots.

On October 25, 2005, the pilot submitted a letter to the FAA Civil Aerospace Medical Institute, requesting the return of his medical certificate, which was surrendered. In the letter, the pilot stated, "...on Sunday, February 15, 2004... my left Achilles tendon was torn necessitating an operation...the following day I was in severe pain and I was given a prescription for tablets of 7.5 mg Lortab [hydrocodone/acetaminophen]...In May of 2004, I described my continuing pain

to a friend, not a doctor, who happened to have a supply of Klonopin tablets (clonazepam). On his recommendation I started taking these tablets without consulting my doctor..."

The letter further stated, "On September 16[sic], 2004 I flew an airplane to the Somerset Airport in New Jersey and, on touching down, the aircraft swerved into a hangar destroying itself...The local police investigated the incident and found Klonopin tablets in the aircraft I was piloting. Recognizing dependency, I enrolled voluntarily in Advanced Recovery Center (ARC) in Delray Beach, Florida, for treatment."

Review of the pilot's medical records by an NTSB Medical Doctor revealed that on the pilot's most recent application for second-class airman medical certificate, the pilot indicated "Yes" in response to the question about "Substance dependence" and "Alcohol dependence or abuse." Under "Comments on History and Findings" the pilot stated, "...involved in airplane crash. Substance abuse involved..." There was no additional information in the medical records examined regarding the abuse of any substances other than clonazepam.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	42, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Single-engine sea; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	May 1, 2003
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	June 1, 2004
Flight Time:	1380 hours (Total, all aircraft), 115 hours (Total, this make and model), 1107 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 15 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 6 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Cessna	Registration:	N29BF
Model/Series:	185F	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	18502380
Landing Gear Type:	Amphibian	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	April 1, 2004 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3350 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	20 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	1590 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	IO-550-D2B
Registered Owner:	Elm Leaf Inc	Rated Power:	300 Horsepower
Operator:	Michael Foise	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	SMQ, 105 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:	09:07 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 2500 ft AGL	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	5 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	50°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.3 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	19°C / 13°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Hartford, CT (HFD)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Somerville, NJ (SMQ)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	08:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	

Airport Information

Airport:	Somerset Airport SMQ	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	105 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	30	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	2733 ft / 65 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Full stop

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	40.625831,-74.669998

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Demko, Stephen
Additional Participating Persons:	Robert Ferenz; FAA/FSDO; Allentown, PA Bart Ritoro; New Jersey Division of Aeronautics; Trenton, NJ
Original Publish Date:	October 31, 2006
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=60133

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

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](#).