



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Melbourne, Florida	Accident Number:	ERA15LA224
Date & Time:	May 27, 2015, 16:25 Local	Registration:	N1732M
Aircraft:	Cessna 337	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Loss of control on ground	Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

While taxiing, the private pilot did not follow the controller's instructions and his speech was slurred. The airplane then taxied off the end of a taxiway and turned right toward a building that was located about 200 ft away and abeam the taxiway end. The airplane impacted the building and an adjacent communications antenna, resulting in substantial damage to the left wing. Law enforcement personnel arrived about 15 minutes later and detected an odor of alcohol from the pilot. A search of the airplane revealed an unopened bottle of wine, one half-full bottle of liquor, and an open water bottle that contained a clear liquid with an odor of alcohol. The pilot refused to take an alcohol breathalyzer and field sobriety test. He was subsequently taken into custody and charged under a state statute for operation of an aircraft while intoxicated. Examination of the airplane did not reveal any preimpact mechanical malfunctions.

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 directional control while taxiing as a result of his impairment due to alcohol ingestion.

Findings

Personnel issues	Aircraft control - Pilot
Aircraft	Directional control - Not attained/maintained
Personnel issues	Alcohol - Pilot
Environmental issues	Airport structure - Ability to respond/compensate

Factual Information

History of Flight

Taxi	Loss of control on ground (Defining event)
Taxi	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)

On May 27, 2015, at 1625 eastern daylight time, a Cessna 337F, N1732M, was substantially damaged when it struck a building and a communications antenna while taxiing at the Melbourne International Airport (MLB), Melbourne, Florida. The pilot and passenger were not injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and an instrument flight rules flight plan was filed for the personal flight, which was destined for Dayton, Ohio. The flight was conducted under the provisions of Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91.

According to a police report, the pilot requested a taxi clearance from the north ramp area to runway 9L. The tower controller advised the pilot that his clearance to Dayton, Ohio had expired, and instructed him to return to the ramp. The pilot's speech was "slurred" and he did not follow any of the controller's instructions. The pilot then taxied west on taxiway kilo toward the departure end of runway 9L. The airplane then went off the end of the taxiway and immediately turned right toward a building that was located about 200 feet away and abeam the taxiway end. The airplane impacted the building and an adjacent communications antenna.

At 1626, the controller contacted the airport police and urged them to respond quickly because he "felt that the pilot may be intoxicated and they heard the screams of a young child onboard." The police arrived on scene at 1640 and detected an odor of alcohol from the pilot. A search of the airplane revealed an unopened bottle of wine, one opened bottle of liquor about half full and an opened "water" bottle that contained a clear liquid with an odor of alcohol. After the pilot refused to take an alcohol breathalyzer and field sobriety test he was taken into custody and charged under Florida State Statute with "Operation of an aircraft while intoxicated or in a careless or reckless manner."

According to a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) inspector, the airplane came to rest against a small building located along the airport perimeter fence. The leading edge of the left wing sustained substantial damage, and the front engine propeller tips were bent forward and gouged. The aircraft examination was completed by an airframe and powerplant mechanic and supervised by the airport operations director. Examination of the flight control systems, nosewheel steering, and brake system revealed no anomalies that could have precluded normal operation.

The pilot held a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) private pilot certificate with ratings for airplane single engine land, multiengine land (limited to centerline thrust) and instrument Airplane. He also held a third-class medical certificate, which was issued on November 13, 2014 with a limitation of "must wear corrective lenses." At that time, he reported 1,238 total flight hours experience.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	57, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Unknown
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	November 13, 2014
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	1238 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Passenger Information

Certificate:		Age:	10
Airplane Rating(s):		Seat Occupied:	Unknown
Other Aircraft Rating(s):		Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):		Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):		Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:		Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:			

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Cessna	Registration:	N1732M
Model/Series:	337 F	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1970	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	33701332
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	6
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Unknown	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	4630 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	2 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	CONT MOTOR
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	IO-360 SER
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	210 Horsepower
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:	KMLB,27 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	1 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	16:53 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	113°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 3600 ft AGL	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 6500 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	10 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	60°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.13 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	28°C / 19°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Melbourne, FL (MLB)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	IFR
Destination:	Dayton, OH	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	16:25 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class D

Airport Information

Airport:	MELBOURNE INTL MLB	Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:	33 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:		IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	28.106945,-80.659721(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Brazy, Douglass
Additional Participating Persons:	Cory E Best; FAA/FSDO; Orlando , FL
Original Publish Date:	September 11, 2018
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=91254

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](#).