



Aviation Investigation Final Report

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|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| Location: | Maxwell, Iowa | Accident Number: | CEN18LA137 |
| Date & Time: | April 5, 2018, 16:00 Local | Registration: | N2433Z |
| Aircraft: | Quicksilver GT 400 | Aircraft Damage: | Substantial |
| Defining Event: | Loss of control in flight | Injuries: | 1 Serious |
| Flight Conducted Under: | Part 91: General aviation - Personal | | |

Analysis

The noncertificated pilot reported that he had just purchased the ultralight airplane. He added that he had not received a weather briefing before the flight. The previous owner reported that, earlier on the day of the accident, he flew a demonstration flight for the pilot in the airplane with “no issues.” He advised the pilot to use 10° of flaps for takeoff for improved performance; however, the previous owner saw the airplane take off without the flaps extended. Shortly after takeoff, he saw a wind gust push the airplane into a tree. The pilot reported he had no recollection of the accident.

Examination of the airplane revealed that both wings and the fuselage had sustained substantial damage. Flight control continuity was established, and propeller damage was found that was consistent with the engine producing power at the time of impact. The pilot reported that there were no preaccident mechanical malfunctions or failures with the airplane that would have precluded normal operation.

The pilot was unfamiliar with airplane make and model and reported having flown only 3.5 hours in the previous 20 years in a Cessna or Beechcraft airplane. When asked by the previous owner if he was a pilot, the noncertificated pilot said, “yes”.

Therefore, given the available evidence, it is likely that the noncertificated pilot, failed to maintain control of the ultralight airplane when he encountered the wind gust.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

The noncertificated pilot's unfamiliarity with the airplane, which resulted in a loss of airplane control when the pilot encounter a wind gust.

Findings

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| Personnel issues | Total experience w/ equipment - Pilot |
| Personnel issues | Aircraft control - Pilot |
| Aircraft | (general) - Not attained/maintained |

Factual Information

History of Flight

| Takeoff | Loss of control in flight (Defining event) |
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On April 5, 2018, about 1600 central daylight time, a Quicksilver GT400 ultralight airplane, N2433Z, was substantially damaged when it was involved in an accident at Maxwell Airport (3NC7), Maxwell, Iowa. The pilot was seriously injured. The airplane was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) Part 91 personal flight.

The pilot reported that he had just purchased the ultralight airplane and that he had not received a preflight weather briefing. The airplane's previous owner reported that, earlier on the day of the accident, he completed a demonstration flight for the pilot in the airplane with "no issues." He advised the pilot to use 10° of flaps for takeoff for improved performance; however, the previous owner saw the airplane take off without the flaps extended. After takeoff, he saw a wind gust push the airplane into a tree. The pilot reported he had no recollection of the accident.

The pilot reported having flown only 3.5 hours in the previous 20 years in a Cessna or Beechcraft airplane and that did not hold a pilot certificate. The pilot indicated he thought the airplane was operated under 14 CFR Part 103; therefore, he believed that he did not require a pilot certificate. When asked by the previous owner if he was a pilot, the noncertificated pilot said, "yes".

Examination of the airplane revealed that both wings and the fuselage had sustained substantial damage. Flight control continuity was established, and propeller damage was found that was consistent with the engine producing power at the time of impact. The pilot reported that there were no preaccident mechanical malfunctions or failures with the airplane that would have precluded normal operation.

Pilot Information

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|----------------------------------|------|--|----------|
| Certificate: | None | Age: | 43, Male |
| Airplane Rating(s): | None | Seat Occupied: | Single |
| Other Aircraft Rating(s): | None | Restraint Used: | 5-point |
| Instrument Rating(s): | None | Second Pilot Present: | No |
| Instructor Rating(s): | None | Toxicology Performed: | |
| Medical Certification: | None | Last FAA Medical Exam: | |
| Occupational Pilot: | No | Last Flight Review or Equivalent: | |
| Flight Time: | | | |

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

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|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Aircraft Make: | Quicksilver | Registration: | N2433Z |
| Model/Series: | GT 400 NO SERIES | Aircraft Category: | Airplane |
| Year of Manufacture: | 2003 | Amateur Built: | |
| Airworthiness Certificate: | Experimental light sport (Special) | Serial Number: | GT2801487 |
| Landing Gear Type: | Tailwheel | Seats: | 1 |
| Date/Type of Last Inspection: | | Certified Max Gross Wt.: | 570 lbs |
| Time Since Last Inspection: | | Engines: | 1 Reciprocating |
| Airframe Total Time: | | Engine Manufacturer: | Rotax |
| ELT: | Not installed | Engine Model/Series: | 503 |
| Registered Owner: | On file | Rated Power: | 50 Horsepower |
| Operator: | On file | Operating Certificate(s) Held: | None |

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

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|---|---------------------|---|-------------------|
| Conditions at Accident Site: | Visual (VMC) | Condition of Light: | Day |
| Observation Facility, Elevation: | KIKV,910 ft msl | Distance from Accident Site: | 12 Nautical Miles |
| Observation Time: | 15:55 Local | Direction from Accident Site: | 222° |
| Lowest Cloud Condition: | Few / 9500 ft AGL | Visibility | 10 miles |
| Lowest Ceiling: | | Visibility (RVR): | |
| Wind Speed/Gusts: | 4 knots / | Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Wind Direction: | | Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Altimeter Setting: | 30.25 inches Hg | Temperature/Dew Point: | 1°C / -12°C |
| Precipitation and Obscuration: | | | |
| Departure Point: | Maxwell, IA | Type of Flight Plan Filed: | None |
| Destination: | Sac City, IA (KSKI) | Type of Clearance: | None |
| Departure Time: | | Type of Airspace: | |

Airport Information

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|-----------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|------|
| Airport: | Private Strip N/A | Runway Surface Type: | |
| Airport Elevation: | 3050 ft msl | Runway Surface Condition: | Soft |
| Runway Used: | | IFR Approach: | None |
| Runway Length/Width: | | VFR Approach/Landing: | None |

Wreckage and Impact Information

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| Crew Injuries: | 1 Serious | Aircraft Damage: | Substantial |
| Passenger Injuries: | | Aircraft Fire: | None |
| Ground Injuries: | | Aircraft Explosion: | None |
| Total Injuries: | 1 Serious | Latitude, Longitude: | 41.8402,-92.6146(est) |

Administrative Information

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| Investigator In Charge (IIC): | Liedler, Courtney |
| Additional Participating Persons: | Tony Will; FAA; Des Moines, IA |
| Original Publish Date: | May 20, 2021 |
| Last Revision Date: | |
| Investigation Class: | Class 3 |
| Note: | The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident. |
| Investigation Docket: | https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=96990 |

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](#).