



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Covington, Georgia	Accident Number:	ERA22FA199
Date & Time:	April 21, 2022, 18:44 Local	Registration:	N84GR
Aircraft:	Cessna 340	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:	Loss of control in flight	Injuries:	2 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The student pilot, who was the new owner of the multi-engine airplane, and a private pilot flew commercially to Lubbock, Texas, utilized a ride-hailing service to drive to Portales, New Mexico; they met with the former owner of the airplane to finalize the purchase of the airplane and flew it back to Georgia the same day. The next day, the student pilot commenced flight training with the private pilot who offered to provide flight instruction to the student pilot in the student pilot's newly acquired multi-engine airplane, even though he did not possess a flight instructor's rating or a multi-engine airplane rating.

Radar data showed that the track of the accident airplane's route consisted of their departure airport, a midway stop, and the third leg of the flight, where it crashed during the approach to their destination airport. Witnesses observed a sharp right turn before the airplane's spiraling descent and impact with terrain and unoccupied semi-trailers. Surveillance footage from a parking lot security camera captured the airplane in a right spiral turn just before the accident. The airplane was destroyed by impact forces and the postimpact fire.

The postaccident examination of the airframe, engines, and propellers revealed no anomalies that would preclude normal engine and airplane performance. Additionally, a review of the maintenance logbook revealed that the airplane was overdue for its annual maintenance inspection; no special flight permit (ferry permit) was obtained from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for its return flight to Georgia.

Toxicological testing of the student pilot revealed the presence amphetamine, a prescription Schedule II controlled substance that may result in cognitive deficits that pose a risk to aviation safety; however, its effect, if any on the accident flight could not be determined.

It is likely that the private pilot's failure to maintain aircraft control was exacerbated by his lack of a multi-engine airplane rating, his lack of a flight instructor rating, and his poor decision making.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

The private pilot's loss of control in flight, which resulted in a collision with terrain. Contributing to the accident was the student pilot's decision to obtain flight instruction from the private pilot and the private pilot's insufficient qualifications to fly or to provide flight instruction in a multi-engine airplane.

Findings

Personnel issues	Aircraft control - Pilot
Personnel issues	Qualification/certification - Pilot
Aircraft	Lateral/bank control - Capability exceeded
Personnel issues	Decision making/judgment - Pilot
Personnel issues	Decision making/judgment - Student/instructed pilot

Factual Information

History of Flight

Maneuvering

Loss of control in flight (Defining event)

HISTORY OF FLIGHT

On April 21, 2022, at 1844 eastern daylight time, a Cessna 340, N84GR, was destroyed when it was involved in an accident in Covington, Georgia. The private pilot and student pilot were fatally injured. The airplane was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91 personal flight.

According to the student pilot's partner, both the student pilot, who was the new owner of the multi-engine airplane, and a private pilot flew to Lubbock, Texas, on a commercial airline on April 20, 2022, the day before the accident. Then they took an Uber to Portales, New Mexico, to meet with the former owner of the airplane to finalize the purchase of the airplane so that they could fly it back to Georgia the same day. They departed Portales Municipal Airport (RPZ) and arrived at the Covington Municipal Airport (CVC) in Atlanta, Georgia, about 11 pm. She stated that on the next day, the student pilot began his flight training with the private pilot, whom she believed to be his flight instructor. She added that the student pilot had recently met the private pilot who offered to teach him how to fly the multi-engine airplane.

According to radar data provided by the FAA, the accident airplane departed Dekalb-Peachtree Airport (PDK) in Atlanta, Georgia, about 1640 and flew to Gwinnett County Airport-Briscoe Field (LZU) in Lawrenceville, Georgia, arriving about 1650. The airplane departed LZU about 1712 and arrived at Lumpkin County-Wimpey's Airport (9A0) in Dahlonega, Georgia, about 1731. On the third leg of the flight, it departed 9A0 about 1813, enroute to CVC, where it crashed during approach in the vicinity of the airport about 1844. The airplane was destroyed by impact forces and the postimpact fire.

Multiple witnesses in the accident vicinity reported seeing the airplane execute a hard right banking turn, followed by a spiral descent and impact with a row of unoccupied semi-trailers. Surveillance footage from a parking lot security camera captured the airplane in a right spiral turn just before the accident, which corroborated witness accounts.

PILOT INFORMATION

PRIVATE PILOT

The private pilot who offered to instruct the student on flying the multi-engine airplane held a single-engine land rating, but he did not have a multi-engine land airplane rating or a flight

instructor's rating. The private pilot's logbook was not available for review to verify the currency of his flight experience. However, he reported flight experience of 3,148 total hours, with 31 hours in the last six months as of December 12, 2016. The pilot was issued a second-class medical certificate without limitations.

STUDENT PILOT

The student pilot reported zero total flight hours and zero hours in the last six months as of his medical exam dated January 26, 2022. The student pilot was issued a second-class medical certificate without limitation. The student pilot's logbook was not available for review to verify the currency of his flight experience.

AIRCRAFT INFORMATION

A review of the maintenance logbooks indicated that the aircraft had surpassed its annual inspection deadline by over a month, which was March 4, 2021. Since the airplane was "out-of-annual," a special flight permit, commonly referred to as a "ferry permit," was required for it to be flown. No FAA Form 8130-6, "Application for U.S. Airworthiness Certificate" for special flight permits, was issued for the airplane for it to fly to Georgia from New Mexico.

WRECKAGE AND IMPACT INFORMATION

The aircraft wreckage was located 1 nautical mile southeast of runway 10/28. It impacted an unoccupied semi-truck trailer and commercial business parking lot. A postimpact fire consumed most of the airframe. Remnants of the right horizontal stabilizer and elevator were found within the debris area. Remnants of the vertical stabilizer and rudder were also located within the debris area. Flight control cables were found within the debris area and were traced from the remnants of the control surfaces to their respective bellcranks. Flight control cables were also traced to the flight controls within the cockpit. The cockpit and instrument panel were destroyed by the postcrash fire. Engine control positions were unreliable due to fire and impact damage.

Examination of both engines revealed fire and impact damage. All fuel lines and ignition wiring on both engines were destroyed by the postcrash fire. Both engines separated from the airframe and sustained thermal damage. Each cylinder was examined with a lighted borescope. No obvious preimpact abnormalities were noted in either engine. Both vacuum pump drive shafts were melted. Charred debris was observed in the left engine fuel injector Nos. 1, 4, and 5; similar debris was observed in the right engine fuel injector Nos. 2 and 4. The left engine fuel distribution valve burned away, exposing the screen. The right engine fuel distribution valve gasket burned and deposited burned debris on the screen.

Examination of the propellers revealed both had similar impact damage. All three blades on both propellers were partially consumed in the postcrash fire. Blade damage included visible chordwise/rotational scoring on several blades in each propeller, bending in the aft/drag direction. The blades were twisted towards low pitch with leading-edge gouging consistent

with impact while rotating with power. There was no damage to indicate either propeller was feathered at the time of impact. Internal damage on the preload plates and fork slots indicated the blade angle on both propellers was in the low pitch range at impact. There were no anomalies noted in the components examined that would prevent or degrade normal operation before impact with terrain. All damage was consistent with high impact forces.

MEDICAL REVIEW AND PATHOLOGICAL INFORMATION

Private Pilot

The Georgia Bureau of Investigation Division of Forensic Sciences performed the pilot's autopsy at the request of the Newton County Coroner. According to the autopsy report, the cause of death was multiple blunt impact injuries and the manner of death was accident.

Toxicology testing performed at the FAA Forensic Sciences Laboratory was negative for carbon monoxide and drugs.

Student Pilot

The Georgia Bureau of Investigation Division of Forensic Sciences performed the student pilot's autopsy at the request of the Newton County Coroner. According to the autopsy report, the cause of death was inhalation of products of combustion and thermal injuries, and the manner of death was accident.

Toxicology testing performed at the FAA Forensic Sciences Laboratory was negative for carbon monoxide. Amphetamine, a prescription Schedule II controlled substance was detected in heart blood at 60 ng/mL and urine at 1531 ng/mL. Cetirizine, an over-the-counter antihistamine was detected at a low level in heart blood, and in urine at 121 ng/mL. (See Medical Factual Memorandum of Record).

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	50, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Unknown
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Unknown
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	December 12, 2016
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 3148 hours (Total, all aircraft), 0 hours (Total, this make and model), 31 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft)		

Student pilot Information

Certificate:	Student	Age:	33, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Unknown
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Unknown
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	January 26, 2022
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 0 hours (Total, all aircraft), 0 hours (Total, this make and model)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Cessna	Registration:	N84GR
Model/Series:	340 Undesignated Series	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1973	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	340-0178
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	6
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	March 4, 2021 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3921 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	2 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	7581 Hrs as of last inspection	Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	TSIO-520-K
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	335 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:	CVC,819 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	1 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	18:35 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	130°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	None / None
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	30.35 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	23°C / 12°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Dahlonega, GA (9A0)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Covington, GA (CVC)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	18:13 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class D

Airport Information

Airport:	Covington Municipal Airport KCVC	Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:	819 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Unknown
Runway Used:		IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	2 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	On-ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	On-ground
Total Injuries:	2 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	33.62488,-83.82656

Preventing Similar Accidents

Manage Risk: Good Decision-making and Risk Management Practices are Critical (SA-023)

The Problem

Although few pilots knowingly accept severe risks, accidents can also result when several risks of marginal severity are not identified or are ineffectively managed by the pilot and compound into a dangerous situation. Accidents also result when the pilot does not accurately perceive situations that involve high levels of risk. Ineffective risk management or poor aeronautical decision-making can be associated with almost any type of fatal general aviation accident.

What can you do?

- Develop good decision-making practices that will allow you to identify personal attitudes that are hazardous to safe flying, apply behavior modification techniques, recognize and cope with stress, and effectively use all resources. Understand the safety hazards associated with human fatigue and strive to eliminate fatigue contributors in your life.
- Understand that effective risk management takes practice. It is a decision-making process by which you can systematically identify hazards, assess the degree of risk, and determine the best course of action.
- Be honest with yourself and your passengers about your skill level and proficiency. Refuse to allow external pressures, such as the desire to save time or money or the fear of disappointing passengers, to influence you to attempt or continue a flight in conditions in which you are not comfortable.
- Be honest with yourself and the FAA about your medical condition. If you have a medical condition or are taking any medication, do not fly until your fitness for flight has been thoroughly evaluated.
- Plan ahead with flight diversion or cancellation alternatives, and brief your passengers about the alternatives before the flight.

See <https://www.nts.gov/Advocacy/safety-alerts/Documents/SA-023.pdf> for additional resources.

The NTSB presents this information to prevent recurrence of similar accidents. Note that this should not be considered guidance from the regulator, nor does this supersede existing FAA Regulations (FARs).

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Alleyne, Eric
Additional Participating Persons:	Kenneth D Murray; FAA/FSDO; Atlanta, GA
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Investigation Class:	Class 3
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=104986

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](#).