



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

Location:	Middlesboro, KY	Accident Number:	ERA14LA218
Date & Time:	05/02/2014, 1340 EDT	Registration:	N702JS
Aircraft:	BEECH V35B	Injuries:	1 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The private pilot departed in the airplane, which he had purchased that morning, with his dog onboard. According to the airplane's previous owner, who witnessed the accident, shortly after takeoff, the pilot announced over the common traffic advisory frequency that the "door popped open" and that he was returning to the airport. The witness further stated that, on final approach, about 30 feet above ground level, the airplane banked left, rolled wings level, flew perpendicular away from the runway, and impacted the ground in a flat attitude. The airplane subsequently became engulfed in flames.

Postaccident examination of the airframe and engine did not reveal any abnormalities that would have precluded normal operation. Thermal damage around the main cabin door precluded determination of the main cabin door locking mechanism's position at the time of impact. It is likely that the pilot did not securely latch the main cabin door before takeoff and that the door partially opened in flight, which resulted in his decision to return to the departure airport. It is also likely that the pilot's dog was not in an animal carrier, which further distracted the pilot. As the pilot slowed the airplane for landing, his attention was likely more focused on the partially opened door and the dog than the landing, which resulted in his failure to maintain airplane control during the landing approach.

Flight Events

Takeoff - Miscellaneous/other
Approach-VFR pattern final - Loss of control in flight
Approach-VFR pattern final - Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)
Post-impact - Fire/smoke (post-impact)

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's failure to maintain airplane control during the landing approach due to his diverted attention to the partially opened main cabin door and the unsecured dog. Contributing to the accident was the pilot's failure to securely latch the main cabin door before takeoff and to secure his dog.

Findings

Aircraft-Aircraft oper/perf/capability-Performance/control parameters-(general)-Not attained/maintained - C
Aircraft-Aircraft structures-Doors-Passenger/crew doors-Incorrect use/operation - F
Personnel issues-Action/decision-Action-Incomplete action-Pilot - F
Personnel issues-Task performance-Use of equip/info-Aircraft control-Pilot - C
Personnel issues-Psychological-Attention/monitoring-Attention-Pilot - C

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	71
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land	Instrument Rating(s):	None
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Instructor Rating(s):	None
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 2300 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Manufacturer:	BEECH	Registration:	N702JS
Model/Series:	V35B	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Operator:	On file	Engine Manufacturer:	Tyledyne Continental Motors
Air Carrier Operating Certificate:	None	Engine Model/Series:	IO-550-B(5)
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Observation Facility, Elevation:	K1A6, 1154 ft msl	Weather Information Source:	Weather Observation Facility
Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 5500 ft agl
Condition of Light:	Day	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	4 knots, 270°
Temperature:	18°C / 4°C	Visibility	10 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Middlesboro, KY (1A6)	Destination:	

Airport Information

Airport:	MIDDLESBORO-BELL COUNTY (1A6)	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Runway Used:	10	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Length/Width:	3631 ft / 75 ft		

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	On-Ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Shawn Etcher	Adopted Date:	12/15/2014
Investigation Docket:	http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/search/dockList.cfm?mKey=89155		

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), established in 1967, is an independent federal agency mandated by Congress through the Independent Safety Board Act of 1974 to investigate transportation accidents, determine the probable causes of the accidents, issue safety recommendations, study transportation safety issues, and evaluate the safety effectiveness of government agencies involved in transportation. The NTSB makes public its actions and decisions through accident reports, safety studies, special investigation reports, safety recommendations, and statistical reviews.

The Independent Safety Board Act, as codified at 49 U.S.C. Section 1154(b), precludes the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an incident or accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report.