



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	Murieta, CA	Accident Number:	WPR14CA184
Date & Time:	05/02/2014, 1830 PDT	Registration:	N8603X
Aircraft:	CESSNA 180D	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Loss of control on ground	Injuries:	3 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The high-wing, tailwheel-equipped airplane had just been signed off on its most recent annual inspection, and the pilot/owner had also topped off the fuel tanks before he flew it about 10 miles to a friend's private grass/dirt airstrip. The pilot described it as a "one way" strip, explaining that the landing direction was "uphill" and the takeoff direction was "downhill." The pilot had operated into and out of the airstrip about 20 times previously. All those flights, as well as that day's inbound flight and landing, were uneventful. After boarding and start up, the pilot back-taxed to the top of the rise that constituted the beginning of the runway. That section of the runway was more steeply sloped (downhill) than the rest of the runway. As the pilot reached the beginning of the runway, he made a 180-degree left turn, and began the takeoff roll; he did not straighten the tailwheel prior to application of takeoff power. As soon as the pilot added takeoff power, the nose "went about 15 degrees left." The pilot continued the takeoff attempt, and tried to recover the desired ground track by application of full right rudder. The pilot saw that the airplane was headed for a golf cart, with a person seated in it, that was situated about 80 feet off the left side of the runway. The pilot opted to turn more sharply left in order to avoid the cart and person, and this action took the airplane on a track that was more divergent from the runway axis. The left main landing gear struck a hummock and fracture-separated from the airplane, which resulted in lower fuselage and left wing ground contact. The airplane slid to a stop, with substantial damage to the fuselage and left wing. The pilot stated that the wind was "way under" 10 mph, coming onto the right side of the airplane during the takeoff attempt. He reported that he did not abandon the takeoff attempt at the initial veer off, because he was concerned about the airplane nosing over onto its back during an attempt to stop. One passenger reported that the initial directional excursion was "almost immediately" about 45 degrees off the runway axis. Post-accident examination of the airplane did not reveal any pre-impact conditions which would have precluded normal operation. Review of weight and balance information indicated that the center of gravity was very slightly forward of the forward limit, and the airplane might have been very slightly above its maximum certificated takeoff weight. Neither condition would have contributed to the loss of directional control.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:
The pilot's loss of directional control during takeoff. Contributing to the accident was the pilot's failure to abort the takeoff at the initial veer off.

Findings

Aircraft	Directional control - Not attained/maintained (Cause) Landing gear steering system - Incorrect use/operation
Personnel issues	Aircraft control - Pilot (Cause) Decision making/judgment - Pilot (Factor)
Environmental issues	Sloped/uneven terrain - Contributed to outcome

Factual Information

History of Flight

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

Certificate:	Private	Age:	58
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Glider; Helicopter	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 With Waivers/Limitations	Last Medical Exam:	11/26/2013
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	09/11/2012
Flight Time:	1319 hours (Total, all aircraft), 348 hours (Total, this make and model), 6 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Manufacturer:	CESSNA	Registration:	N8603X
Model/Series:	180D D	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	18051003
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	05/02/2014, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2650 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	1 Hours	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	5180 Hours	Engine Manufacturer:	CONT MOTOR
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-470 SERIES
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	230 hp
Operator:	On file	Air Carrier Operating Certificate:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Observation Facility, Elevation:		Observation Time:	
Distance from Accident Site:		Condition of Light:	Day
Direction from Accident Site:		Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Temperature/Dew Point:	
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility	20 Miles
Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	5 knots/ 999 knots, Variable	Visibility (RVR):	
Altimeter Setting:		Visibility (RVV):	
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Murieta, CA (None)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	1830 PDT	Type of Airspace:	

Airport Information

Airport:	Private (None)	Runway Surface Type:	Dirt; Grass/turf
Airport Elevation:	2080 ft	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	99	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	1900 ft / 60 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	2 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	3 None		

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Michael C Huhn	Adopted Date:	09/24/2014
Additional Participating Persons:	Michael Baudoux; FAA FSDO; Riverside, CA		
Publish Date:	07/14/2015		
Note:	This accident report documents the factual circumstances of this accident as described to the NTSB.		
Investigation Docket:	http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/search/dockList.cfm?mKey=89180		

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