



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Preliminary Report

Location:	Lansing, WV	Accident Number:	ERA21FA377
Date & Time:	September 26, 2021, 10:09 Local	Registration:	N3342L
Aircraft:	Beech C23	Injuries:	3 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

On September 26, 2021, at 1009 eastern daylight time, a Beech C-23, N3342L, was substantially damaged when it was involved in an accident in Lansing, West Virginia. The private pilot and two passengers were fatally injured. The airplane was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91 personal flight.

The airplane departed New River Gorge Airport (WV32). The airport owner, his brother, and a neighbor witnessed the accident. They each provided statements and their versions of events were consistent throughout. The airplane had been parked at the airport in front of the owner's hangar all weekend. One the day of the accident (Sunday), the pilot and two passengers arrived, loaded their luggage and camping gear, and the airplane started and taxied from its mid-field parking spot to the approach end of runway 22, which was 2,950 ft long at a 1,720 ft elevation.

According to the witnesses, the airplane "powered up" and accelerated. When the airplane reached the point where "airplanes usually lift off," it continued accelerating down runway 22. The takeoff was aborted, the airplane continued to the runway end, and subsequently departed from runway 04.

One witness said, "I thought he would take off this time." Instead, the airplane continued to accelerate until engine power was reduced, and the takeoff was aborted. The airplane continued to the departure end of runway 04, turned around, and began to takeoff from runway 22. One witness stated that as the airplane approached the departure end, "...he was going too fast to stop at the end of the runway but not fast enough to take off."

According to the airport owner, the airplane lifted off "maybe" 800 ft before the departure end of the runway, cleared the trees at the departure end, and flew over Mill Creek which ran below and perpendicular to the runway. The terrain on the opposite bank was higher than the runway and included mature trees. The owner said, "I thought he might make it..." over the trees, but instead the airplane banked steeply left, and disappeared below the trees. He estimated the

bank angle was 45° and said that the engine sound was smooth and continuous from engine start until the sound of impact.

The pilot held a private pilot certificate with ratings for airplane single engine land and instrument airplane. Examination of his logbook revealed 395.7 total hours of flight experience logged, with an estimated 312 hours of experience in the accident airplane make and model.

The reported weather conditions at an airport located about 18 miles south of the accident site resulted in an estimated density altitude at WV32 of 1,845 ft.

The airplane came to rest on the opposite side of Mill Creek about 880 ft south of the departure end of runway 22. The initial tree strike was in a treetop about 60 ft above the ground and uphill from where the airplane came to rest. The wreckage path was about 75 ft long and oriented 090°. Several pieces of angularly cut wood were found along the wreckage path. The main wreckage came to rest upright and faced about 090°, and all major components were accounted for at the scene. The engine was dislodged from its mounts, rested inverted, and the propeller spinner displayed torsional twisting. The two propeller blades showed similar spanwise bending and leading-edge gouging. The firewall, instrument panel, windshield posts, and cockpit floor were destroyed by impact. The windscreen was separated.

The leading edges of both wings were crushed aft in compression, and the skin of the right wing outboard of the right main landing gear was separated and found uphill from the main wreckage. The right aileron remained attached to the separated section. The cockpit and cabin area roof and floor areas were deformed by impact. Flight control cable continuity was established for all flight controls.

The engine crankshaft was rotated through the vacuum pump drive. Engine continuity was established through the accessory section to the powertrain and valvetrain. Compression was confirmed using the thumb method. The magnetos each produced spark at all leads. The spark plugs displayed minimal normal wear signatures. Fuel was observed at the fuel pump and the carburetor. The carburetor fuel inlet screen was clean and absent of debris.

The maximum allowable gross weight of the airplane was 2,450 lbs. and the calculated useful load of the accident airplane was 862.4 lbs.

The luggage and camping gear onboard the airplane was weighed with a bathroom scale and the total cargo weight was 253 lbs. The estimated occupant weight combined with the cargo weight was an estimated 813 lbs. Total fuel weight was estimated at either 193 lbs (32 gallons) or 83 lbs (14 gallons) based on full tanks (60 gallons) or 2/3 tanks (40 gallons) at departure from the airplane's home base. No fuel was added at WV32.

Based on the C23 Pilot's Operating Handbook, Take-Off Distance – Hard Surface performance chart, and the following conditions: max gross weight of 2,450 lbs., density altitude of 1,845 ft, headwind of 4 knots, and a temperature 15°C, the interpolated ground roll was 1,280' and the distance to clear a 50 ft obstacle was 2,239 feet. The liftoff speed was 65 knots and 74 knots at 50 ft. Stall speed with flaps UP and 45° bank was 74 knots.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Beech	Registration:	N3342L
Model/Series:	C23	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Amateur Built:			
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Operator Designator Code:

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	VMC	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KBKW, 2514 ft msl	Observation Time:	10:51 Local
Distance from Accident Site:	18 Nautical Miles	Temperature/Dew Point:	15°C / 8°C
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	5 knots / , 240°
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility:	10 miles
Altimeter Setting:	30.2 inches Hg	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Departure Point:	Lansing, WV	Destination:	Chesapeake, VA (CPK)

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	2 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	3 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	38.08354, -81.06757 (est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Rayner, Brian
Additional Participating Persons:	Jeffrey Burch; FAA/FSDO; Charleston, WV Peter Basile; Textron Aviation; Wichita, KS Troy Helgeson; Lycoming Engines; Williamsport, PA
Note:	The NTSB traveled to the scene of this accident.