



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Noreen Price
Aviation Accident Investigator
Alaska Regional Office

Date: June 3, 2020
Persons Contacted: David Shrader, pilot and owner/builder
NTSB Accident Number: ANC20CA053 N324WS Ambler, Alaska

Narrative: Mr. Shrader is the builder/owner and operator of the Zenith CH-701 that had an accident at the Kobuk Sand Dunes on May 31, 2020. He was interviewed by telephone. This is a summary of his statements.

Mr. Shrader is a pilot with about 350 hours of flight experience; all of which have been in this airplane. He is also an FAA airframe and powerplant mechanic with inspection authorization.

He stated that he landed on the sand dunes and shut down for about 45 minutes. Then he started up and took off in the same direction, but he could not recall what direction that was in. He stated that the winds were about a 5 to 10 knot crosswind. During the takeoff roll, the airplane experienced some bumps, but nothing significant. When the airplane was almost at rotate speed, about 45 mph, it hit a bump and unexpectedly “leaped into the air.” The attitude was nose high when the airplane came back to the ground and the nosewheel collapsed immediately and the airplane flipped over on its back. Upon post accident inspection, the nose gear fork was sheared from the strut; however, the strut was not deformed at all. He provided two photographs. (See figures 1 and 2)

He reported that the damage included a crushed rudder, buckled fuselage at the forward door jam, wrinkled wings, wrinkled wing struts.

Mr. Shrader stated that he landed at the dunes once before about 5 years ago.

Mr. Shrader stated that he altered the Zenith nose wheel fork by adding 3 inches for more “leverage.” He said that perhaps the extension is what caused the failure, and if so, then it is his fault. He will provide more photographs and keep the nose fork for analysis.

He provided his FAA certificate numbers as [REDACTED]



Figure 1. Fractured nosewheel fork



Figure 2. Airplane at the accident site.