

## Witness Statement Form

|                                                                  |                                        |                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Place of Incident:</b> Manistee County-Blacker Airport (KMBL) |                                        |                           |
| <b>Witness Name:</b> Chad Richard Paalman                        |                                        | <b>Date:</b> 8-14-2014    |
| <b>Mailing Address:</b> [REDACTED]                               | <b>City:</b> Dimondale                 | <b>State:</b> MI          |
| <b>Zip Code:</b> 48821                                           | <b>Time of Incident:</b> 15:10 (Local) |                           |
| <b>Aircraft No.</b> N468LE                                       | <b>Color:</b> White / Maroon Stripe    | <b>Other Description:</b> |
| <b>Telephone (Cell):</b> [REDACTED]                              |                                        | <b>(Work):</b> [REDACTED] |

**Tell in your own words what you saw and heard before and at the time the incident occurred.**

On 08/05/2014 at approximately 3:10 pm, the Cessna Cardinal RG (N468LE) that I was flying while accompanied by a CFI crashed during the initial climb while departing runway 19 out of KMBL.

The intended route, prior to the accident, was from KMBL direct to KLDM. Approximately 20 minutes before our takeoff, weather information pertinent to our route of flight was obtained. At the time, the weather reporting station (AWOS-3) at KMBL was inoperative, as stated in the airport NOTAM's. The main source for obtaining wind information at the point of departure was the windsock located at the northwestern part of the airport near the FBO. Preceding our taxi from the parking ramp of the FBO to runway 19, the windsock showed that the winds were light and variable, mainly coming from the east.

Due to the fact that the purpose of flying the aircraft we did was for training, the winds being light and variable, and our direction of flight being south, the CFI suggested I perform a short field takeoff from runway 19 (2721 by 75ft.). According to the aircrafts POH, at maximum weight and with the conditions for that day, the amount of runway needed to clear a 50' obstacle was approximately 1850 feet.

According to the weight and balance, the aircrafts CG was centered and the aircraft was under maximum gross weight. Around 3:00 pm myself, the CFI, and two other passengers approached the hold short line for runway 19. At this time, the CFI and I performed the before takeoff checklist using the call and response method. The CFI called out each item on the checklist, I performed, and the CFI confirmed. I set our flaps to 20 degrees for the short field takeoff per the CFI's instruction.

At this time I rolled onto runway 19, using the most available runway. Once the nose wheel of the aircraft was centered, I held the brakes and set the throttle for maximum power. We confirmed that engine temperatures and pressures were within limits and released the brakes. As the aircraft began the takeoff roll, the CFI commented that the flaps were set at 20 degrees and should be 10 degrees. He proceeded to immediately change the flap setting to 10 degrees.

I called out that the airspeed was alive as we continued with our takeoff roll. Approaching approximately 66 knots, I called out rotation speed and began to pull back on the elevator, lifting off right around 70 knots. By the time the aircraft lifted off the ground we had approximately 1000' of runway remaining. We continued to climb only about 5-10 ft. above the runway when all of a sudden the aircrafts airspeed dropped rapidly and began to sink back to the ground. The aircrafts wheels had touched down right before the end of the runway and continued its forward momentum down the hill and into the tree line about 350' from the end of runway 19 where it came to a rapid halt.

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The only thing that I remember feeling or seeing, when the aircraft lost airspeed about 5-10 ft. above the surface of the runway, was a downward force on the airplane as we neared the top of the tree line from the runway surface. To the best of my knowledge, the dramatic change in airspeed was not due to any maintenance issues. The aircraft's throttle setting was still set to full power during the loss of airspeed and altitude. I did not hear or see anything during the time of the accident that would lead me to believe otherwise.

**Witness Signature:**

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of the witness.

**Date:** 8-14-2014