

Communication Summary

November 9, 2020

Communication From: Michelle Watters, MD, PhD, MPH



Dr. Watters was asked to review the CEN20LA379 Chester, AR, case because of toxicology findings of ethanol in the pilot's muscle tissue.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) medical case review, the pilot's autopsy, FAA Forensic Sciences Laboratory toxicology reports, and relevant medical information and regulations were reviewed.

According to the FAA medical case review, the 31-year-old male pilot held a third-class medical certificate without limitations. His only FAA medical certification exam was on 11/29/17 and at that time he reported he had accrued 11 total flight hours. He was 69 inches tall and weighed 205 pounds. He reported taking no medications and having a veteran's partial disability for a knee injury and post-traumatic stress disorder which he described as temporary after his return from Afghanistan. No other medical concerns or issues were identified.

According to the State Crime Laboratory, Medical Examiner Division, Little Rock, Arkansas autopsy report, the cause of death was multiple traumatic injuries, and the manner of death was accident. The examination was limited by the extensive injuries.

Toxicology testing performed by the FAA Forensic Sciences Laboratory on the pilot's muscle tissue was positive for ethanol at 0.023 grams per hectogram (gm/hg). No tested for drugs were detected in muscle tissue.

Ethanol is a social drug commonly consumed by drinking beer, wine, or liquor. It acts as a central nervous system depressant; it impairs judgment, psychomotor functioning, and vigilance. Ethanol is water soluble, and after absorption it quickly and uniformly distributes throughout the body's tissues and fluids. The distribution pattern parallels water content and blood supply of the tissue. Ethanol can be produced after death by microbial activity. FAA regulation Section 91.17 (a) prohibits any person from acting or attempting to act as a crewmember of a civil aircraft while having 0.040 grams per deciliter (gm/dL) or more ethanol in the blood.

I can attest that the above summary is correct to the best of my knowledge:

Edward F. Malinowski
National Transportation Safety Board
Air Safety Investigator