

National Transportation Safety Board

Office of Aviation Safety
Central Region



CEN22LA440

RECORD OF CONVERSATION

John M. Smith, FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector

November 10, 2022

Interviewee: John M. Smith, FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector
Date/Time: November 10, 2022 / 0815 CST
Location: Telephone Call
Investigator: Andrew Todd Fox, NTSB Air Safety Investigator

FAA Inspector Smith and NTSB Investigator Fox discussed the following:

The Merrill Municipal Airport manager, Mr. Rich McCullough, told Inspector Smith that the accident occurred shortly after liftoff from runway 7 with a gusting southwest wind 19-22 mph (16.5-19 knots). Additionally, Mr. McCullough stated that another pilot reported that the airplane was in good working order during an earlier flight on the day of the accident.

Based on pilots' reports, the airplane rolled right shortly after liftoff from runway 7. The airplane's right wingtip impacted the ground before the airplane landed hard.

Postaccident examination of the airplane revealed substantial damage to a fuselage longeron aft of the baggage door and the left side of the stabilator. Both wings exhibited minor damage. The nose landing gear and the left main landing gear separated during impact. There was no apparent damage to the firewall or the nose landing gear assembly that was part of the engine motor mount.

Flight control cable continuity was confirmed for the ailerons, rudder, and stabilator. The aileron system exhibited binding due to impact-related damage to the right aileron.

A visual examination of the engine exterior did not reveal any damage. The propeller blades exhibited damage consistent with rotation at impact. One propeller blade was bent aft about midspan. The other propeller blade exhibited a S-shape bend and blade twist toward low pitch.

Inspector Smith stated that his review of the maintenance logbooks revealed a current annual inspection and no recent write-ups indicating any type of a problem with the airplane.

Based on Inspector Smith's wreckage examination, there were no preimpact anomalies or malfunctions that would have prevented normal operation of the airplane. The observed binding to the aileron system was due to impact-related damage.