

To: Brandon Molina, FAA Inspector – MKE FSDO
From: Michael Ladd, Pilot of N34284

N34284 Incident Report

February 24, 2025

My Planned flight was from Y73 (Stambaugh, MI) to EGV (Eagle River, WI) to deliver the Aircraft for annual inspection at Noble Aviation in Eagle River Wisconsin.

My Aircraft is currently based at Y73 with runway 17/35 being 40ft wide with no shoulders and 2000ft long. I was formerly based at EGV.

I have made many takeoffs and landings from each of these airports in N34284.

Before leaving home:

I briefed weather & Notams, calculated weight and balance, and made a personal evaluation (IM SAFE) of my readiness to act this PIC for this flight.

There is no AWOS at Y73

I checked current Metars at EGV, RHI, LNL, and IMT

I checked TAF at RHI and SAW

I also checked MOS weather for Y73.

Outlook was VFR with gusting crosswinds out of the west/southwest at departure and destination airport.

I calculated my weight and balance and determined that the aircraft would be 104 pounds below Gross weight limit of 2500 lb. and the CG within limits.

Using the POH I calculated the takeoff distance required to be 985ft. given current loading and weather conditions.

Upon arrival at the departure airport (Y73)

I evaluated the winds from the midpoint of the departure runway. Y73 has a wind sock but no AWOS. The runway was fair to poor asphalt, wet, and clear of snow and ice.

I conducted a preflight inspection of N34284, using the checklist from the POH (pilots operating handbook - there is no AFM for this 1972 Cessna Cardinal).

Usable Fuel and oil quantities were measured. Fuel quality was evaluated.

I found the aircraft to be airworthy and capable of making the planned flight.

I performed a passenger Briefing.

Both passengers had flown with me before in this airplane and were familiar with operation of seatbelts, shoulder straps, and doors.

I made another evaluation of the wind. My estimate was winds from 250 at 15 gusting to 30 kts.

Engine Start

Engine start-up was normal. Pre-takeoff checklist was completed with wingflaps set at 10° as specified in the POH. Elevator and Rudder trim were set for takeoff.

Taxi & Takeoff

I taxied into takeoff position at runway 17, Did a final pre-takeoff check, and applied full power for takeoff with right aileron into the crosswind.

Initial Engine Indications were good with oil, pressure, manifold pressure and RPM all in normal operating range. The airspeed indicator was alive.

At an airspeed of 65 mph, I started to apply back pressure to the yoke. All engine indications were good.

The aircraft broke ground at approximately 1250 feet down the runway.

The aircraft was not climbing, and it felt as though the tail was falling.

I kept the wings level and pitch control neutral in order to gain airspeed. I could not stop the aircraft from drifting to the left and the runway is only 40 feet wide. The airport lighting configuration is non-standard, with Runway end lights located approximately 40 ft. from the edge of the runway.

I felt and heard the impact of the Landing gear striking something.

Climb out

After the impact, I kept the wings level and pitch neutral attempting to gain airspeed before initiating a climb. After a short time, the vertical speed increased to about 400 FPM with altitude increasing.

At approximately 1500 AGL, I checked my left main landing gear and it appeared to be OK. I asked my right seat passenger to check the right main landing gear and he informed me that the tire was gone.

I turned to my destination of EGV, climbing to about 5000 feet.

I contacted Minneapolis center to inform them of my situation. I requested a squawk code and asked them to contact emergency services at Eagle River.

I then contacted EGV Unicom, informed them of my situation, asked them to call emergency services and to be prepared to look at my aircraft as I flew over to try to evaluate damage to the aircraft.

After two passes over EGV, I was informed that my left main gear seemed OK, my nose gear seemed OK, and the right main tire was gone.

I briefed my passengers to tighten their seatbelts and shoulder straps, and roll up their coats to hold in front of them for extra padding.

After entering a left downwind leg for runway 22, I performed a Gumps (final landing) check and we unlatched the cabin doors.

I aimed for touchdown 1500 feet past the Approach end of runway 22

I landed on the left main tire first, then the nose tire touched down, then held the right main off as long as I could. After the right main touched down, I kept as close as possible with Rudder and brakes.

When the aircraft came to a stop, I shut off fuel, ignition, and electrical systems. Then we all got out of the aircraft and moved away from it as emergency response personnel arrived. No one sustained any injury.

2) There was nothing out of the ordinary with the aircraft prior to this flight.

3) The main causal factor was wind. Winds were known to be Gusty and Crosswind. The winds apparently changed direction as takeoff was attempted, causing a tailwind component and failure to achieve the necessary climb.

4) Lessons learned. Consider postponing flights or reduction in aircraft weight in strong, gusty conditions, especially on short and narrow runways.

At the time of this incident, The Aircraft was 104 pounds below Gross weight limit. CG was within limits. Further reduction in aircraft weight would have helped the Aircraft get off the ground earlier.

In gusting/shifting wind conditions, it doesn't take much change in wind direction for a crosswind to turn into a tailwind component.

5) Aircraft total time is 4472.1 hours at the end of this flight.