

Inspector Statement

Inspector Paul Pryor
Rochester Flight Standards District Office

Re: Interview of First Responder and Royalton Airport Manager for N508CT

July 27, 2015

During the investigation of the accident of N508CT Inspector Steele and I were interviewing the Royalton Airport Manager. The Airport Manager was giving us a statement when I was approached by a gentleman that asked me to contact him regarding N508CT.

Inspector Steele and I phoned the gentleman that asked to be contacted. He requested that we come to his home to discuss the accident. We arrived at his home and discussed the events at the witness's kitchen table.

During the course of the interview it was learned that he was the first person on scene of the accident. He stated that it took him some time to arrive at the aircraft due to difficulty finding the aircraft in the heavily wooded area next to the departing runway. Once he found the aircraft he discovered the pilot, John Schnabel the sole occupant, kneeling in the aircraft. He stated the aircraft was lying on its left side and Mr. Schnabel was trying to exit the aircraft on the right side. The pilot was confused and was trying to exit the aircraft via the right door. Opening the door was not necessary since the aircraft window was destroyed in the accident. The witness stated the pilot would have been able to exit the aircraft from the window that no longer existed.

The witness stated he spoke with Mr. Schnabel about his condition and asked him if he was hurt. Mr. Schnabel tried to exit the aircraft but was unable due to the injuries from the accident. The witness stated he never asked Mr. Schnabel about the events that led up to the accident. The witness stated his intent was to comfort Mr. Schnabel and make sure he remained conscious until the first responders were able to arrive at the accident site.

Inspector Steele and I interviewed the Royalton Airport Manager. He described hearing the engine runup for N508CT being conducted outside of his office. He stated the engine runup sounded normal. He observed Mr. Schnabel back taxi N508CT down runway 25 for departure. The airport manager has a small window that overlooks the part of the airport. From where the Manager was seated he could see only the rotation and lift off of the aircraft. He stated that both appeared normal.

The following summarizes the statements from both witness:

Witnesses reported the pilot performed an engine run-up at the approach end of runway 7, then back taxied down the runway to the departure end of runway 25 where he turned around and initiated

takeoff from 25. Witnesses reported to FAA personnel that at rotation the airplane appeared to pitch up higher than normal followed by up and down pitch oscillations and left bank oscillations, climbing no higher than approximately 75 feet. The airplane also began a slow bank to the left, before impacting trees south of the runway in a left wing low attitude. The airplane came to rest in a heavily wooded area coming to rest nearly inverted on an easterly heading. Witnesses called 911 to report the accident and the pilot was rescued and transported to a hospital for treatment of his injuries.

I believe the facts stated in this Inspector Statement are true.

Paul Pryor