



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

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September 1, 2016

Mr. Daniel Boggs
Air Safety Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board
45065 Riverside Parkway
Ashburn, VA 20147

Mr. Boggs:

On August 23, 2016, I was tasked to assist the NTSB with investigating an occurrence involving a Sea-ray aircraft, Registration Number N801SR, Serial Number 1MK283 that experienced a hard landing at the Sebring Airport in Florida. The purpose of the investigation was to determine the severity of the occurrence and if any of the FAA nine responsibilities were factors that contributed to the occurrence. Listed below are the preliminary results of my investigation:

1. On the morning of August 24, 2016, I received an e-mail from the FAA Regional Operation Center (ROC), the e-mail contained FAA Form 8020-9 which stated that they were two soles on board the aircraft when the incident occurred, Mr. Author C. Stifel, the Pilot In Command (PIC) and Mr. William H. Hickman a passenger.
2. On August 24, 2016 I traveled to the Sebring Airport to inspect the aircraft and gather information on the conditions of the individuals that were onboard the aircraft when the incident occurred. I arrived at the airport at approximately 2:00 PM and inspected the aircraft N801SR al Number 1MK283 for any damage; it was being stored on a trailer within a hanger at the airport. A visual inspection of the aircraft revealed minor damage to the left rear section of the fiberglass fuselage; however, I could not find and major damage to the aircraft frame or structure. During my visit I was also told by the Sebring Airport manager that both occupants of the aircraft were taken to the hospital for treatment shortly after the incident.
3. On August 26, 2016 I received a phone call from Mr. Hickman who stated that the engine sputter and quit shortly after takeoff from the Sebring airport. The PIC returned the aircraft to airport and made an emergency landing. The aircraft made a hard landing and skid across the field between the runway and taxiway coming to rest on the taxiway. Mr. Hickman also stated that he sustained minor back injury during the hard landing; he was treated and release from the hospital the same day

4. On August 28, 2016, I received a phone call from the PIC of the aircraft, Mr. Stifel. He informed me that he was admitted to hospital in Sebring Florida after the incident then transferred to Bayfront Health hospital in St. Petersburg Florida for further treatment. He also stated that he sustained a broken back and is still in the hospital with a back brace undergoing further treatment. Mr. Stifel also stated that earlier in the day he flew the aircraft from Bartow Florida where it was being stored in a hanger to Sebring Florida, then ate lunch prior to flying again. However, just after takeoff at an altitude of approximately 200 feet the engine sputter and shutoff. He nosed the DOWN and made a hard landing on the airport.

Conclusion

In my opinion, the accident was a result of a loss of engine power during takeoff. Further investigation at a later date will determine the cause of the engine failure or some other factor.

Due to injuries sustained by the pilot in command of the aircraft that required hospitalization for more than 48 hours, from the date of the incident. I have classified this incident as an **accident** in accordance with FAA Order 8020-11.

If you need additional assistance or information, please contact Inspector Robert Haynes at the above address, or by telephone, at [REDACTED] Monday through Friday from 8:00 am until 4:30 pm.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Robert E. Haynes
Principal Aviation Safety Inspector