



Heidi Kemner
Senior Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region Aviation

Date: June 1, 2021
NTSB Accident Number: ERA21LA071

Medical and Pathological Information:

An autopsy of the pilot was performed by the Office of the Medical Examiner, St. Augustine, Florida. The pilot's cause of death was blunt force injuries.

Toxicology testing performed by the FAA's Forensic Services Laboratory on the pilot's muscle and brain detected ethanol in the muscle, but not in the brain. Furthermore, the testing detected N-Butanol and Propanol in the muscle and Famotidine in the urine and liver.

Ethanol is the intoxicant in beer, wine, and liquor; it acts as a central nervous system depressant. After ingestion, at low doses, it impairs judgment, psychomotor functioning, and vigilance; at higher doses alcohol can cause coma and death. Federal Aviation Regulations, Section 91.17 (a) prohibits any person from acting or attempting to act as a crewmember of a civil aircraft while having 0.040 gm/dL or more alcohol in the blood. The effects of alcohol on aviators are generally well understood; alcohol significantly impairs pilots' performance, even at very low levels. However, ethanol and other alcohols such as N-butanol and N-propanol may also be produced in body tissues after death. When ingested, ethanol is rapidly distributed widely through the body tissues but when produced after death, tissue levels may vary widely. Famotidine is an over-the-counter heartburn medication commonly marketed with the name Pepcid. It is not generally considered impairing.