



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Elbert, Colorado	Accident Number:	CEN17LA367
Date & Time:	September 13, 2017, 13:37 Local	Registration:	N812SM
Aircraft:	MILLER STEVEN M RV6 A	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Loss of control on ground	Injuries:	2 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The private pilot reported that he was conducting a personal, cross-country flight and that, when he was about 5 miles from his destination airport, he checked the AWOS, which reported wind from 280° at 24 knots, gusting to 32 knots. He checked the AWOS again while entering the base leg for runway 27, and the reported wind had not changed. Upon turning to final, the pilot felt strong wind and added power to stay higher than a normal approach. With flaps set to 40°, the pilot decreased power and started to flare the airplane. The wheels hit the runway hard, the airplane bounced, and a wind gust pushed the airplane left off the runway. After the airplane bounced again, the pilot added power and attempted a go-around. Subsequently, the airplane again exited the left side of the runway and struck a cistern and a fence and then came to rest inverted. Based on the evidence, it is likely that the pilot improperly flared the airplane in strong gusting wind conditions, which resulted in the airplane bouncing and the subsequent loss of directional control.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

The pilot's improper landing flare in strong gusting wind conditions, which resulted in a bounced landing, and his loss of directional control during an attempted go-around, which resulted in a runway excursion and impact with objects.

Findings

Personnel issues	Aircraft control - Pilot
Aircraft	Landing flare - Not attained/maintained
Environmental issues	Gusts - Effect on operation
Environmental issues	High wind - Effect on operation
Aircraft	Directional control - Not attained/maintained
Aircraft	Directional control - Not attained/maintained
Environmental issues	(general) - Effect on operation

Factual Information

History of Flight

Landing	Other weather encounter
Landing	Hard landing
Landing	Abnormal runway contact
Landing	Loss of control on ground (Defining event)
Landing	Runway excursion
Landing	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)
Landing	Roll over

On September 13, 2017, about 1337 mountain daylight time, a Vans RV-6 experimental airplane, N812SM, registered to the pilot, sustained substantial damage when it impacted the ground following a loss of control during an attempted go-around at Kelly Airpark (CO15), Elbert, Colorado. The pilot and passenger sustained serious injuries. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and a flight plan was not filed. The personal flight was being conducted under the provisions of Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91. The flight originated from the La Junta Municipal Airport (LHX), La Junta, Colorado, at 1300.

The pilot stated that he was 5 miles south of CO15 and called the automated weather observing system (AWOS) via radio. He stated that the AWOS reported wind from 280° at 24 knots with gusts of 32 knots. He called AWOS again while entering the base leg for runway 27 and the reported wind again was from 280° with gusts of 32 knots. Upon turning to final, the pilot felt the strong wind and added power to stay higher than a normal approach. With flaps set to 40°, the pilot decreased power and started to flare. He stated that the wheels hit hard and the airplane bounced, and a gust of wind moved the airplane to the south off the runway. After another bounce, the pilot added power and attempted a go-around. The airplane struck a cistern to the left of the runway, a fence, and came to rest inverted.

A witnesses stated that there were strong wind gusts at the time of the accident. The nearest weather reporting facility was located about two miles from the accident site, and at 1329, the wind was reported from 280° at 21 knots with gusts of 25 knots.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	64,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	4-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	June 7, 2017
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	November 2, 2016
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 1414 hours (Total, all aircraft), 795 hours (Total, this make and model), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	MILLER STEVEN M	Registration:	N812SM
Model/Series:	RV6 A A	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	2002	Amateur Built:	Yes
Airworthiness Certificate:	Experimental (Special)	Serial Number:	23302
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	January 15, 2017 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1600 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	1185 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	C91 installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	O-360-A1A
Registered Owner:		Rated Power:	180 Horsepower
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	MNH,7060 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	2 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	13:29 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	270°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 10000 ft AGL	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 12000 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	21 knots / 25 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/ None
Wind Direction:	290°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.1 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	23°C / 2°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	LaJunta, CO (LHX)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Elbert, CO (CO15)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	13:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class E

Airport Information

Airport:	Kelly Airpark CO15	Runway Surface Type:	Grass/turf
Airport Elevation:	7040 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	27	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	1700 ft / 50 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Full stop;Go around

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	39.224723,-104.639999(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Lemishko, Alexander
Additional Participating Persons:	Brett Proud; FAA FSDO; Denver, CO
Original Publish Date:	April 13, 2020
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=96088

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