



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

|                                |   |                         |             |
|--------------------------------|---|-------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Location:</b>               | Lansing, Michigan                             | <b>Accident Number:</b> | CEN23LA363  |
| <b>Date &amp; Time:</b>        | August 15, 2023, 08:05 Local                  | <b>Registration:</b>    | N261SW      |
| <b>Aircraft:</b>               | Beech C-99                                    | <b>Aircraft Damage:</b> | Substantial |
| <b>Defining Event:</b>         | Loss of control in flight                     | <b>Injuries:</b>        | 1 Minor     |
| <b>Flight Conducted Under:</b> | Part 135: Air taxi & commuter - Non-scheduled |                         |             |

## Analysis

The pilot reported that after a normal start and taxi, the airplane was cleared for takeoff. During the takeoff roll, the airplane drifted right and the pilot corrected with the left rudder. When the airplane reached 100 knots, he rotated the airplane, and about 30 feet in altitude, the airplane experienced a roll to the right. The pilot tried to correct the roll with left rudder but was unable to provide sufficient left rudder. At this point, the airplane had drifted to the right of the runway and over the adjacent parallel taxiway. He was able to regain partial control by reducing engine power and banking the airplane to the left. The pilot attempted to land on the taxiway but was unable to judge his height above ground due to the low visibility, and subsequently impacted terrain to the right of the taxiway. Both wings and the fuselage sustained substantial damage. Prior to exiting the airplane, the pilot noted that the rudder trim was set to the full nose-right position. The pilot reported no preaccident mechanical malfunctions or failures with the airplane that would have precluded normal operation.

Prior to the accident, maintenance was completed that consisted of an "Event II & Routine" inspection. The inspection procedure required the rudder trim system to be lubricated, a trim tab free play inspection, and an operational check prior to returning the airplane to service. Review of the maintenance procedures revealed there was no guidance on returning the rudder trim control system back to a neutral position at completion of the inspection.

## Probable Cause and Findings

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

The pilot's failure to properly set the rudder trim position which resulted in a loss of directional control during takeoff. Contributing was the pilot's inadequate checklist procedures prior to takeoff.

## Findings

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| <b>Personnel issues</b>      | Aircraft control - Pilot                            |
| <b>Aircraft</b>              | Rudder tab control system - Incorrect use/operation |
| <b>Personnel issues</b>      | Use of checklist - Pilot                            |
| <b>Personnel issues</b>      | Preflight inspection - Pilot                        |
| <b>Organizational issues</b> | Adequacy of policy/proc - Operator                  |
| <b>Aircraft</b>              | Return to service - Related maintenance info        |

## Factual Information

### History of Flight

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Prior to flight | Aircraft maintenance event                 |
| Prior to flight | Preflight or dispatch event                |
| Initial climb   | Loss of control in flight (Defining event) |
| Initial climb   | Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)         |

### Pilot Information

|                           |  |                                   |                |
|---------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| Certificate:              | Commercial   | Age:                              | 27,Male        |
| Airplane Rating(s):       | Single-engine land; Multi-engine land  | Seat Occupied:                    | Right          |
| Other Aircraft Rating(s): | None   | Restraint Used:                   | 4-point        |
| Instrument Rating(s):     | Airplane   | Second Pilot Present:             | No             |
| Instructor Rating(s):     | None   | Toxicology Performed:             |                |
| Medical Certification:    | Class 1 Without waivers/limitations  | Last FAA Medical Exam:            | July 6, 2023   |
| Occupational Pilot:       | Yes  | Last Flight Review or Equivalent: | August 4, 2023 |
| Flight Time:              | 1218 hours (Total, all aircraft), 26 hours (Total, this make and model), 397 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 66 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 26 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 0 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft) |                                   |                |

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

|                                      |                                 |                                       |                          |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Aircraft Make:</b>                | Beech                           | <b>Registration:</b>                  | N261SW                   |
| <b>Model/Series:</b>                 | C-99                            | <b>Aircraft Category:</b>             | Airplane                 |
| <b>Year of Manufacture:</b>          | 1983                            | <b>Amateur Built:</b>                 |                          |
| <b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>    | Normal                          | <b>Serial Number:</b>                 | U-202                    |
| <b>Landing Gear Type:</b>            | Retractable - Tricycle          | <b>Seats:</b>                         | 2                        |
| <b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b> | August 14, 2023 AAIP            | <b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>       | 11300 lbs                |
| <b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>   |                                 | <b>Engines:</b>                       | 2 Turbo prop             |
| <b>Airframe Total Time:</b>          | 27642.9 Hrs at time of accident | <b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>           | Pratt & Whitney          |
| <b>ELT:</b>                          | C126 installed, not activated   | <b>Engine Model/Series:</b>           | PT6A-36                  |
| <b>Registered Owner:</b>             | UAS TRANSERVICES INC            | <b>Rated Power:</b>                   | 750 Horsepower           |
| <b>Operator:</b>                     | Ameriflight, LLC                | <b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b> | On-demand air taxi (135) |
| <b>Operator Does Business As:</b>    | Ameriflight                     | <b>Operator Designator Code:</b>      | JIKA                     |

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

|   |                         |   |                  |
|---|-------------------------|---|------------------|
| <b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>     | Instrument (IMC)        | <b>Condition of Light:</b>                  | Day              |
| <b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b> | KLAN, 857 ft msl        | <b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>         | 1 Nautical Miles |
| <b>Observation Time:</b>                | 08:26 Local             | <b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>        | 257°             |
| <b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>          | Scattered / 1100 ft AGL | <b>Visibility</b>                           | 0.75 miles       |
| <b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>                  | Broken / 3900 ft AGL    | <b>Visibility (RVR):</b>                    |                  |
| <b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>                | 18 knots / 27 knots     | <b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>     | /                |
| <b>Wind Direction:</b>                  | 40°                     | <b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b> | /                |
| <b>Altimeter Setting:</b>               | 29.8 inches Hg          | <b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>               | 17°C / 15°C      |
| <b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>   | Moderate - None - Mist  |   |                  |
| <b>Departure Point:</b>                 | Lansing, MI (LAN)       | <b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>           | IFR              |
| <b>Destination:</b>                     | Pellston, MI (KPLN)     | <b>Type of Clearance:</b>                   | IFR              |
| <b>Departure Time:</b>                  | 08:00 Local             | <b>Type of Airspace:</b>                    | Class C          |

## Airport Information

|                             |                                    |                                  |         |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------|
| <b>Airport:</b>             | Captial Regional International LAN | <b>Runway Surface Type:</b>      | Asphalt |
| <b>Airport Elevation:</b>   | 860 ft msl                         | <b>Runway Surface Condition:</b> | Wet     |
| <b>Runway Used:</b>         | 10R                                | <b>IFR Approach:</b>             | None    |
| <b>Runway Length/Width:</b> | 8506 ft / 150 ft                   | <b>VFR Approach/Landing:</b>     | None    |

## Wreckage and Impact Information

|                            |         |                             |                      |
|----------------------------|---------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Crew Injuries:</b>      | 1 Minor | <b>Aircraft Damage:</b>     | Substantial          |
| <b>Passenger Injuries:</b> | N/A     | <b>Aircraft Fire:</b>       | None                 |
| <b>Ground Injuries:</b>    | N/A     | <b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>  | None                 |
| <b>Total Injuries:</b>     | 1 Minor | <b>Latitude, Longitude:</b> | 42.778237,-84.586755 |

## Preventing Similar Accidents

Perform Advanced Preflight After Maintenance (SA-041)

### The Problem

In-flight emergencies, accidents, and deaths have occurred after pilots flew aircraft with incorrectly rigged flight control or trim systems. Maintenance personnel who serviced or checked the systems did not recognize that the control or trim surfaces were moving in the wrong direction. Pilots who flew the airplanes did not detect the control anomalies during their preflight checks. In many cases, although maintenance personnel made mistakes, the pilots could have prevented the accidents by performing thorough or advanced preflight checks.

### What can you do?

- Become familiar with the normal directional movement of the flight controls and trim surfaces of the aircraft you fly before it undergoes maintenance. It is easier to recognize “abnormal” if you are already very familiar with what “normal” looks like.
- After maintenance, check systems more thoroughly than the normal preflight checklist implies. For example, if a preflight checklist states, “Trim – Set Takeoff,” verify not only the trim setting but also proper directional travel.
- Be prepared to abort the takeoff if something does not seem right.
- Avoid interruptions and distractions during your preflight inspection to ensure that you do not skip or misevaluate the items you are checking.
- If you suspect that there is a problem with a flight control or trim system, ask qualified maintenance personnel to inspect the aircraft. Do not attempt to perform such work yourself if you are not appropriately qualified, certificated, and authorized to do so.

See <https://www.nts.gov/Advocacy/safety-alerts/Documents/SA-041.pdf> for additional resources.

The NTSB presents this information to prevent recurrence of similar accidents. Note that this should not be considered guidance from the regulator, nor does this supersede existing FAA Regulations (FARs).

## Administrative Information

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>     | Finne, Andrew   |
| <b>Additional Participating Persons:</b> | Norris, Steven; FAA-FSDO; Grand Rapids , MI   |
| <b>Original Publish Date:</b>            | November 9, 2023  |
| <b>Last Revision Date:</b>               |   |
| <b>Investigation Class:</b>              | <a href="#">Class 4</a>   |
| <b>Note:</b>                             | The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.  |
| <b>Investigation Docket:</b>             | <a href="https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=192876">https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=192876</a> |

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person” (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available [here](#).