



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Lititz, Pennsylvania	Accident Number:	ERA25LA137
Date & Time:	March 9, 2025, 15:30 Local	Registration:	N347M
Aircraft:	Beech A36TC	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:	Loss of control in flight	Injuries:	2 Serious, 3 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot reported that, during takeoff, he heard a loud “pop” and was unsure what it was. He pulled the throttle back, then realized that the cabin door had opened. He thought that he subsequently pushed the throttle forward but was not sure. He noticed that the airplane’s airspeed was not increasing and immediately looked for a place to land. A passenger stated that the front door opened as soon as the airplane left the ground. She stated that the pilot contacted the air traffic control tower and requested a return to the airport, and the front-seat passenger held the door closed. The airplane turned left and started “shaking” before it impacted the ground. A security camera captured the airplane departing the runway and turning left. As the airplane lost altitude in the turn, the wings were rocking back and forth, and the tail was low, consistent with a mush condition indicative of an impending aerodynamic stall. The airplane impacted the ground and a postimpact fire consumed most of the wreckage, including the cabin door.

Based on the circumstance of the accident, the pilot likely became distracted by the opening of the cabin door. Review of weight and balance information revealed that the airplane was loaded about 500 lbs above maximum gross takeoff weight, which would have increased its stall speed, reduced its climb performance, and adversely affected its control characteristics. It is likely that as a combined result of these factors, the pilot allowed the airplane’s airspeed to decay to a point where the airplane encountered an aerodynamic stall.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

The pilot's failure to maintain adequate airspeed after takeoff due to his distraction by the opening of the cabin door, which resulted in an exceedance of the airplane's critical angle of attack and an aerodynamic stall/mush condition at too low of an altitude to recover. Contributing to the accident was the airplane's overweight condition, which increased its stall speed and adversely affected its control characteristics.

Findings

Personnel issues	Identification/recognition - Pilot
Personnel issues	Aircraft control - Pilot
Aircraft	Airspeed - Not attained/maintained
Aircraft	Angle of attack - Not attained/maintained
Personnel issues	Weight/balance calculations - Pilot

Factual Information

History of Flight

Takeoff	Miscellaneous/other
Takeoff	Loss of control in flight (Defining event)
Initial climb	Aerodynamic stall/spin

On March 9, 2025, about 1530 eastern daylight time, a Beech A36TC, N347M, was substantially damaged when it was involved in an accident near Lititz, Pennsylvania. The pilot and one passenger were seriously injured, and the three other passengers sustained minor injuries. The airplane was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91 personal flight.

According to the pilot, during takeoff, he heard a loud “pop” and was unsure what it was. He reduced engine power by pulling the throttle back, then realized the cabin door had opened. He thought that he subsequently pushed the throttle forward but was not sure. He noticed that the airplane’s airspeed was not increasing, and he immediately looked for a place to land. He was unable to recall anything that happened after that point.

According to the passenger who was seated in the middle row seat behind the pilot, as soon as the airplane left the ground, the front door opened. The pilot contacted the air traffic control tower and requested to return, and the right-front-seat passenger held the door closed. The airplane began to turn left and started “shaking” before it crashed.

A security camera located at an apartment complex across the street from the airport captured the airplane departing the runway and turning left. As the airplane lost altitude in the turn, the wings were rocking back and forth, and the tail was low. The airplane impacted the ground and continued into a parking lot, striking several cars. A postcrash fire consumed most of the airplane, including the cabin door.

Review of the weight and balance information revealed that the airplane was loaded about 500 lbs above maximum gross takeoff weight.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	45, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	3-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	June 6, 2023
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	555 hours (Total, all aircraft), 70 hours (Total, this make and model)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Beech	Registration:	N347M
Model/Series:	A36TC	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1981	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	EA-253
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	6
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3650 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Turbo prop
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	Rolls Royce
ELT:	Installed	Engine Model/Series:	M250-B17c
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	450
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:	LNS,397 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	0 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	15:53 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	82°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	15 knots / 24 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	None / None
Wind Direction:	300°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	29.87 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	13°C / -7°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Lancaster, PA (LNS)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	IFR
Destination:	Springfield, OH (SGH)	Type of Clearance:	IFR
Departure Time:	15:15 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class D

Airport Information

Airport:	LANCASTER LNS	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	402 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	26	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	6933 ft / 150 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	1 Serious, 3 Minor	Aircraft Fire:	On-ground
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Serious, 3 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	40.120452,-76.298971(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Boggs, Daniel
Additional Participating Persons:	Jerome Wells; FAA/FSDO; Philadelphia, PA
Original Publish Date:	February 11, 2026
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 3
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=199816

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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](#).