



Aviation Investigation Preliminary Report

Location:	Leyden, MA	Accident Number:	ERA24FA088
Date & Time:	January 14, 2024, 17:24 UTC	Registration:	N7345R
Aircraft:	Beech 95-B55 (T42A)	Injuries:	3 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Instructional		

On January 14, 2024, at 1125 eastern standard time, a Beechcraft 95-B-55 airplane, N7345R, was substantially damaged when it impacted terrain near Leyden, Massachusetts. The flight instructor, commercial pilot, and the passenger were fatally injured. The airplane was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91 instructional flight.

A preliminary review of Automatic Dependent Surveillance–Broadcast (ADS-B) radar data revealed that the airplane departed runway 20 at Westfield-Barnes Regional Airport (BAF), Westfield/Springfield, Massachusetts, about 1106. After departure, the airplane made a 180-degree left turn toward the north-northeast. The airplane then climbed to about 3,000 to 3,300 ft mean sea level (msl) and made four alternating 360-degree turns while continuing to fly northbound. After the fourth 360-degree turn, the airplane began to climb, reaching an altitude of about 4,000 ft msl. The airplane then entered a rapid descent until data ended at 1125.

The airplane was not receiving any air traffic control services during the flight and there were no recorded radio communications.

Several witnesses heard and/or observed the airplane before the accident. One eyewitness was walking his dog when he first heard the airplane’s engines and looked up. He said the airplane was “trying to gain altitude,” “then stopped” before the nose of the airplane dropped and “made a straight line” toward the ground. The airplane “corkscrewed” straight down and went out of view. The witness described that the airplane did not appear to make any movements that would indicate it was going to exit the spinning descent. The witness said the airplane, which he estimated was about ¾-mile away from him, descended “fast.” From the time he first observed the airplane until it went out of site was about 8 seconds. The witness described the weather conditions as very windy (and cold), but it was not snowing, and the visibility was good.

Another eyewitness said she heard and saw the airplane flying overhead. The airplane was flying "somewhat erratically." It eventually flew east over a wooded area, then "turned nose down and spiraled out of sight."

Two witnesses were hiking with their dog in the woods when the sound of the airplane's "engine" caught their attention. They did not see the airplane. The witnesses both stated that the "airplane's engine" was really loud and "clunky." It then shut off, before it re-started. When it re-started, it was much quieter. Another witness reported hearing the airplane's engine RPMs "fluctuate drastically."

The airplane impacted terrain located in the Leyden Wildlife Management Area. The wreckage came to rest in a clearing on a hill facing a magnetic heading of about 260 degrees. All major components of the airplane were located at the accident site and there was no postimpact fire. The disposition of the wreckage was consistent with the airplane landing in a relatively flat position with little forward movement. Both wings, along with their respective engines and propeller systems, remained attached to the fuselage. The right wing impacted a tree about mid-span. The tail section was partially separated from the empennage but remained attached via control cables. The fuselage was compressed and crushed downward. Airframe icing was observed on the leading edge of both wings and horizontal stabilizers, both engine nacelles, and the leading edge of the rudder. Ice was also observed on the front face of one of the left engine's propeller blades, and on the nav antenna located on the vertical stabilizer.

Weather reported at Orange Municipal Airport (ORE), Orange, Massachusetts, about 12 miles east of the accident site, at 1152, was reported as wind from 220 degrees at 11 knots gusting to 23 knots, visibility 10 miles, broken clouds at 4,600 ft, a temperature of 2 degrees C, a dewpoint of -7 C, and a barometric pressure setting of 29.68.

At the time of the accident, two AIRMETs (Airman Meteorological Information) were issued and active, including AIRMET Zulu for moderate icing conditions.

There was also a SIGMET (Significant Meteorological Information) for occasional severe turbulence between 3,000 and 16,000 ft (msl) due to strong low-level winds.

The wreckage was recovered to a secure facility for further examination.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Beech	Registration:	N7345R
Model/Series:	95-B55 (T42A)	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Amateur Built:			
Operator:	FLY LUGU LLC	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Designator Code:			

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	VMC	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KORE,555 ft msl	Observation Time:	11:25 Local
Distance from Accident Site:	12 Nautical Miles	Temperature/Dew Point:	2°C /-7°C
Lowest Cloud Condition:		Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	11 knots / 23 knots, 220°
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 4600 ft AGL	Visibility:	10 miles
Altimeter Setting:	29.68 inches Hg	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Departure Point:	Westfield, MA (BAF)	Destination:	Westfield, MA (BAF)

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	2 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	3 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	42.657361,-72.600333

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Read, Leah
Additional Participating Persons:	Ryan Starkey; FAA/FSDO; Hartford, CO Tony Hershberger; Textron; Wichita, KS Ernest Hall; Textron; Wichita, KS
Investigation Class:	Class 3
Note:	