



Publications

Aircraft Accident Report

Loss of Pitch Control During Takeoff

Air Midwest Flight 5481

Raytheon (Beechcraft) 1900D, N233YV

Charlotte, North Carolina

January 8, 2003

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[PDF Document](#) (4 MB)

Executive Summary: On January 8, 2003, about 0847:28 eastern standard time, Air Midwest (doing business as US Airways Express) flight 5481, a Raytheon (Beechcraft) 1900D, N233YV, crashed shortly after takeoff from runway 18R at Charlotte-Douglas International Airport, Charlotte, North Carolina. The 2 flight crewmembers and 19 passengers aboard the airplane were killed, 1 person on the ground received minor injuries, and the airplane was destroyed by impact forces and a postcrash fire. Flight 5481 was a regularly scheduled passenger flight to Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport, Greer, South Carolina, and was operating under the provisions of 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 121 on an instrument flight rules flight plan. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time of the accident.

The National Transportation Safety Board determines that the probable cause of this accident was the airplane's loss of pitch control during takeoff. The loss of pitch control resulted from the incorrect rigging of the elevator control system compounded by the airplane's aft center of gravity, which was substantially aft of the certified aft limit.

Contributing to the cause of the accident were (1) Air Midwest's lack of oversight of the work being performed at the Huntington, West Virginia, maintenance station; (2) Air Midwest's maintenance procedures and documentation; (3) Air Midwest's weight and balance program at the time of the accident; (4) the Raytheon Aerospace quality assurance inspector's failure to detect the incorrect rigging of the elevator control system; (5) the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) average weight assumptions in its weight and balance program guidance at the time of the accident; and (6) the FAA's lack of oversight of Air Midwest's maintenance program and its weight and balance program.

The safety issues in this report focus on maintenance work practices, oversight, and quality assurance; aircraft weight and balance programs; maintenance training; FAA oversight; and Beech 1900 cockpit voice recorder problems. Safety recommendations concerning these issues are addressed to the FAA.

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