NTSB: PREMIER I ACCIDENT PILOT IMPAIRED BY ILLEGAL DRUG

News / Airlines

The pilot of a Beechcraft Premier I that crashed on Dec. 17, 2013, while returning to land at Atlanta Fulton County Airport was impaired from the use of illicit **drugs** and failed to maintain control while maneuvering the airplane in the traffic pattern at night, according to the **NTSB**'s probable cause report. Both the pilot and passenger were killed when the twinjet, N50PM, hit trees, crashed and was consumed by an explosion and post-crash fire at 7:24 p.m. EST.

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Toxicology testing detected methylone in the pilot's blood. "Methylone is a stimulant similar to cocaine and Ecstasy, and its effects can include relaxation, euphoria, and excited calm, and it can cause acute changes in cognitive performance and impair information processing," the NTSB said. "Given the level of methylone (0.34 ug/ml) detected in the pilot's blood, it is likely that the pilot was impaired at the time of the accident."

A review of the cockpit voice recorder revealed that, just after takeoff, the pilot and passenger complained about the cabin being too hot. The pilot subsequently informed the tower air traffic controller that he needed to return to the airport, apparently to remedy the cabin heating problem. On the downwind leg, the EGPWS issued 11 warnings, including obstacle, terrain and stall warnings, before the airplane subsequently hit trees and crashed. Post-accident examination of the airplane revealed no malfunctions or anomalies, the NTSB said.

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