SMALL PLANE CRASHES INTO WOODS AFTER TAKEOFF; PILOT KILLED

News / Airlines

A single-engine plane taking off from a regional airport went off a runway on Saturday morning and then crashed into nearby woods, killing the pilot, authorities said.

Pilot Gary Weller, of Putnam, Connecticut, was the only person aboard the 1996 Mooney M20M, Worcester District Attorney Joseph Early Jr. said.

The aircraft veered to the right after takeoff from Worcester Regional Airport and crashed into trees on airport property, Early said. Weller didn't file a flight plan, and it was unclear where he had planned to fly the plane, Early said.

Construction worker Dylon DeBoise, who was working near the airport, said the aircraft got only slightly off the ground before crashing.

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"It was very low. It looked like it was right above the trees," DeBoise told New England Cable News. "It went up a little bit and then spun over, like almost upside down, and then just went straight down."

There was no fire reported after the crash.

Weller, 66, was pronounced dead at the scene. An autopsy would be conducted by the state's medical examiner, Early said.

The National Transportation Safety Board will take over the investigation and determine the cause of the crash, he said after viewing the crash site.

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