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To: Je vacation
Subject: Bedford GIV crash update

Preliminary GIV Crash Report Focuses on Flaps and Gust Lock

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Preliminary GIV Crash Report Focuses on Flaps and Gust Lock

The NTSB's preliminary report into the crash of a Gulfstream IV during takeoff roll at Bedford Hanscom Field near Boston on May 31 revealed a number of inconsistencies. On June 13, investigators reported that while the flap handle on the jet was set to the "flaps 10" position, the flight data recorder indicated the flaps were set to the "flaps 20" position.

Speculation also focused on the position of the aircraft's gust lock before takeoff. On that subject, the report said, "The flight data recorder (FDR) data revealed the elevator control surface position during the taxi and takeoff was consistent with its position if the gust lock was engaged." The GIV's control lock will normally allow the thrust levers to be advanced beyond six-percent thrust with the lock engaged. "The gust lock handle, located on the right side of the control pedestal, was however found in the forward (OFF) position and the elevator gust lock latch was disengaged," concluded investigators. The Gulfstream's FDR did not record any movement of the flight controls by the crew before takeoff.

AIN spoke with a GIV pilot based in the northeast U.S. who did not wish to be identified but offered some insights on the aircraft. "The position of the controls recorded by the FDR was pretty consistent with where the flight controls normally rest during taxiing," he said. On this basis, the gust lock theory would seem less plausible.

"You normally don't even start the engines with the control lock in place," the pilot added. He explained that part of the Gulfstream takeoff procedure includes feeling the controls lighten as air moves across the tail surfaces early in the takeoff roll. "If we don't feel that by 60 knots or so, it's an automatic abort," he added, while also questioning the takeoff speeds mentioned in the report. "At a light [takeoff] weight, the V1 speed of the GIV should have been about 110 knots," he said, "with rotation at about 124." This prompted him to question why the aircraft reached a speed of 165 knots before the crew aborted the takeoff.

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