



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	RIO GRANDE CITY, TX	Accident Number:	FTW97LA074
Date & Time:	01/02/1997, 0845 CST	Registration:	N1552D
Aircraft:	Beech C90A	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None

Flight Conducted Under: Part 91: General Aviation - Business

Analysis

The pilot planned to navigate south along the road for approximately 25 nautical miles to the Starr County Airport, near Rio Grande City. The pilot stated that while en route to the airport, at an estimated altitude of 1,000 feet MSL, the left engine propeller impacted guide wires and the outer portion of the right wing impacted a tower. According to the Brownsville sectional chart, the tower, which is located on the west side of the road, is 1,002 feet MSL high (519 feet AGL). The pilot reported that he 'checked [the] map to track his position along highway 755, and when he looked up, the tower was right in front, too late to take evasive action.' The pilot also reported that after the collision with the tower, he aborted the approach and proceeded to the McCallen Miller International Airport, where after extending the landing gear manually, an uneventful landing was made.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's failure to maintain clearance with the tower. Factors were the low ceilings and the pilot's diverted attention to his navigation.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: APPROACH

Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - LOW CEILING
2. (C) VISUAL LOOKOUT - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) DIVERTED ATTENTION - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. OBJECT - GUY WIRE
5. OBJECT - TOWER

Factual Information

On January 2, 1997, at 0845 central standard time, a Beech C90A, N1552D, was substantially damaged upon impact with a tower during approach near Rio Grande City, Texas. The airplane, owned by the Sheerin Charter Service L.C., of San Antonio, Texas, and operated by Raytheon Aircraft Services, also of San Antonio, was being operated under Title 14 CFR Part 91, at the time of the accident. The airline transport rated pilot, sole occupant of the airplane, was not injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the business flight for which an instrument flight plan was filed. The flight originated from the San Antonio International Airport at 0740.

According to the pilot, the IFR portion of his flight plan was terminated after he found a clearing in the broken ceiling near the Diamond "O" Ranch airstrip, near La Gloria, Texas. The pilot planned to navigate south along the road for approximately 25 nautical miles to the Starr County Airport, near Rio Grande City. The pilot added that while en route to the airport, at an estimated altitude of 1,000 feet MSL, the left engine propeller impacted guide wires and the outer portion of the right wing impacted the tower. According to the Brownsville sectional chart, the tower which is located on the west side of the road, is 1,002 feet MSL high (519 feet AGL).

In the narrative portion of the enclosed NTSB Form 6120.1/2, the pilot stated that he "checked [the] map to track his position along highway 755, and when he looked up, the tower was right in front, too late to take evasive action."

The pilot reported that after the collision with the tower, he aborted the approach and proceeded to the McCallen Miller International Airport, near McCallen, Texas, where after extending the landing gear manually, an uneventful landing was made.

Examination of the airframe revealed that a 65-inch section of outboard portion of the right wing was damaged, two propeller blades on the left engine propeller were damaged, and a 12-inch incision was found on the left mid wing section.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline Transport; Flight Instructor	Age:	60, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt, Shoulder harness
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane Multi-engine; Airplane Single-engine; Instrument Airplane	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 1 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	12/31/1996
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	13500 hours (Total, all aircraft), 9000 hours (Total, this make and model), 12500 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 132 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 36 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Beech	Registration:	N1552D
Model/Series:	C90A C90A	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	LJ1204
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	8
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	09/11/1996, Continuous Airworthiness	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	10100 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	108 Hours	Engines:	2 Turbo Prop
Airframe Total Time:	1803 Hours	Engine Manufacturer:	P&W
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	PT6A-21
Registered Owner:	SHEERIN CHARTER SERVICE L.C.	Rated Power:	550 hp
Operator:	RAYTHEON AIRCRAFT SERVICES	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	, 0 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	0 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	0000	Direction from Accident Site:	0°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown / 0 ft agl	Visibility	4 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 1000 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	7 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	150°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	21° C / 19° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	SAN ANTONIO, TX (SAT)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	IFR
Destination:	RIO GRANDE CITY, TX (67R)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	0740 CST	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	HECTOR R CASANOVA	Report Date:	08/25/1997
Additional Participating Persons:	ROBERT P ANDERSON; SAN ANTONIO, TX		
Publish Date:			
Investigation Docket:	NTSB accident and incident dockets serve as permanent archival information for the NTSB's investigations. Dockets released prior to June 1, 2009 are publicly available from the NTSB's Record Management Division at pubinquiry@ntsb.gov , or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/ .		

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The Independent Safety Board Act, as codified at 49 U.S.C. Section 1154(b), precludes the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an incident or accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report. A factual report that may be admissible under 49 U.S.C. § 1154(b) is available [here](#).