



# National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

<b>Location:</b>	PENSACOLA, FL	<b>Accident Number:</b>	MIA98LA218
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	08/01/1998, 1315 CDT	<b>Registration:</b>	N7631
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Schweizer SGS 1-34	<b>Injuries:</b>	1 None
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

## Analysis

The pilot stated that the glider was about 100 feet above ground level, and attached to the tow airplane when the canopy suddenly opened. He climbed to 200 feet, released the towrope, and made a 180-degree left turn to return to the airport. As he cleared a wooded area before the runway, he noticed that his sink rate was too high. He pulled up, but his right wingtip brushed the top of a tree. The airplane stalled and crashed about 300 feet short of the runway. According to the pilot, the canopy's latching mechanism did not reveal any malfunctions during preflight or postcrash examination.

## Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

The pilot's failure to maintain a proper sink rate during an emergency landing resulting in impact with trees and subsequent stall and impact with the terrain.

## Findings

Occurrence #1: AIRFRAME/COMPONENT/SYSTEM FAILURE/MALFUNCTION  
Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - INITIAL CLIMB

### Findings

1. (F) WINDOW,CANOPY - OPEN  
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Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING  
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

### Findings

2. (F) DESCENT - EXCESSIVE - PILOT IN COMMAND  
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Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT  
Phase of Operation: APPROACH

### Findings

3. OBJECT - TREE(S)  
4. (C) STALL - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND  
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Occurrence #4: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER  
Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY DESCENT/LANDING

## Findings

### 5. TERRAIN CONDITION - GROUND

#### Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Private	<b>Age:</b>	43
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine Land	<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	None
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	Glider	<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None
<b>Flight Time:</b>	106 hours (Total, all aircraft), 9 hours (Total, this make and model), 36 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 6 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft)		

#### Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Schweizer	<b>Registration:</b>	N7631
<b>Model/Series:</b>	SGS 1-34 SGS 1-34	<b>Engines:</b>	Unknown
<b>Operator:</b>	COASTAL SOARING ASSOCIATION	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	
<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

#### Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual Conditions	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	, 0 ft msl	<b>Weather Information Source:</b>	Pilot
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	None / 0 ft agl	<b>Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:</b>	7 knots / , 360°
<b>Temperature:</b>	32 °C	<b>Visibility</b>	10 Miles
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>			
<b>Departure Point:</b>	, FL (83J)	<b>Destination:</b>	

#### Airport Information

<b>Airport:</b>	COASTAL AIRPORT (83J)	<b>Runway Surface Type:</b>	Grass/turf
<b>Runway Used:</b>	18	<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	Dry
<b>Runway Length/Width:</b>	2500 ft / 250 ft		

#### Wreckage and Impact Information

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

## Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): ALAN YURMAN Adopted Date: 06/21/2000

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 [pubinq@ntsb.gov](mailto:pubinq@ntsb.gov), or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at <http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/>.

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