



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

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| Location: | GRAND COULEE, WA | Accident Number: | SEA00LA027 |
| Date & Time: | 12/01/1999, 1730 PST | Registration: | N4617M |
| Aircraft: | Beech B-19 | Aircraft Damage: | Destroyed |
| Defining Event: | | Injuries: | 2 Serious |
| Flight Conducted Under: | Part 91: General Aviation - Instructional | | |

Analysis

During a night cross-country instructional flight, the instructor chose to divert the aircraft to an alternate airport. While maneuvering in the area of the alternate airport, the aircraft collided with high-voltage power lines 3 miles from the airport. The power lines are approximately 250 feet AGL. Both pilots stated they were unable to recall any of the detailed events from the time they diverted to the alternate airport to the time of the accident. The power lines are displayed on the sectional chart.

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 from power transmission lines. Factors include dark night conditions.

Findings

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

Findings

1. OBJECT - WIRE, TRANSMISSION
2. (C) CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND(CFI)
3. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - DARK NIGHT

Occurrence #2: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Factual Information

On December 1, 1999, approximately 1730 Pacific standard time, a Beechcraft B-19, N4617M, registered to and operated by Big Bend Community College as a 14CFR91 instructional flight, was destroyed after colliding with power lines and terrain approximately three mile northeast of Grand Coulee Dam Airport, Electric City, Washington. The certified flight instructor (CFI) and student pilot both sustained serious injuries. Night visual meteorological conditions prevailed and a flight plan was filed for the cross country flight. The flight originated from the Grant County International Airport (MWH), Moses Lake, Washington, approximately one hour prior to the accident.

In a written statement, the certified flight instructor reported that the intent of the instructional flight was to complete lesson 2-4 in the Training Course Outline (attached). The lesson called for a cross-country flight with a diversion to an alternate airport. After reviewing the weather and the student's flight planning, the two pilots departed MWH at 1625 Pacific standard time, with a planned destination of Anderson Field, Brewster, Washington, (S97). The instructor pilot stated that approximately 20 minutes after departing MWH he instructed the student pilot to divert to Grand Coulee Dam Airport (S97), approximately 25 miles northeast of their location. The instructor pilot and student pilot both remember making a heading change for the new destination airport. However, both pilots were unable to recall any of the detailed events between the time of the heading change and the accident.

The aircraft's initial impact point was a series of tower-mounted, high-voltage transmission lines (that are displayed on the sectional chart), located approximately three nautical miles northeast of the airport. According to Bonneville Power Administration, the height of the power lines are approximately 250 feet above ground level (2,250 feet above mean sea level [MSL]).

According to Douglas County Sheriff's Office, witnesses reported seeing a bright flash, in the vicinity of the power lines, at the approximate time of the accident.

According to a flight navigation log recovered from the accident aircraft, the planned altitude for the cross country flight was 4,500 feet above MSL. The published elevation for Grand Coulee Dam Airport is 1,590 feet MSL.

Post-accident examination of the aircraft revealed no evidence of a pre-impact mechanical failure or malfunction.

Pilot Information

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|----------------------------------|---|--|----------------------------|
| Certificate: | Flight Instructor; Commercial | Age: | 23, Male |
| Airplane Rating(s): | Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land | Seat Occupied: | Right |
| Other Aircraft Rating(s): | None | Restraint Used: | Seatbelt, Shoulder harness |
| Instrument Rating(s): | Airplane | Second Pilot Present: | Yes |
| Instructor Rating(s): | Airplane Multi-engine; Airplane Single-engine; Instrument Airplane | Toxicology Performed: | No |
| Medical Certification: | Class 3 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim. | Last FAA Medical Exam: | 09/18/1997 |
| Occupational Pilot: | | Last Flight Review or Equivalent: | |
| Flight Time: | 566 hours (Total, all aircraft), 297 hours (Total, this make and model), 497 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 210 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 54 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft) | | |

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

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|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Aircraft Make: | Beech | Registration: | N4617M |
| Model/Series: | B-19 B-19 | Aircraft Category: | Airplane |
| Year of Manufacture: | | Amateur Built: | No |
| Airworthiness Certificate: | Normal; Utility | Serial Number: | MB-894 |
| Landing Gear Type: | Tricycle | Seats: | 4 |
| Date/Type of Last Inspection: | 11/15/1999, Annual | Certified Max Gross Wt.: | 2150 lbs |
| Time Since Last Inspection: | 19 Hours | Engines: | 1 Reciprocating |
| Airframe Total Time: | 3744 Hours | Engine Manufacturer: | Lycoming |
| ELT: | Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident | Engine Model/Series: | O-320-E3D |
| Registered Owner: | BIG BEND COMMUNITY COLLEGE | Rated Power: | 150 hp |
| Operator: | BIG BEND COMMUNITY COLLEGE | Operating Certificate(s) Held: | None |

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

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|----------------------------------|------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Conditions at Accident Site: | Visual Conditions | Condition of Light: | Night/Dark |
| Observation Facility, Elevation: | EPH, 1276 ft msl | Distance from Accident Site: | 40 Nautical Miles |
| Observation Time: | 1750 PST | Direction from Accident Site: | 190° |
| Lowest Cloud Condition: | Unknown / 0 ft agl | Visibility | 15 Miles |
| Lowest Ceiling: | Overcast / 3000 ft agl | Visibility (RVR): | 0 ft |
| Wind Speed/Gusts: | 11 knots / | Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Wind Direction: | 170° | Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Altimeter Setting: | 30 inches Hg | Temperature/Dew Point: | 6°C / 3°C |
| Precipitation and Obscuration: | | | |
| Departure Point: | MOSES LAKE, WA (MWH) | Type of Flight Plan Filed: | VFR |
| Destination: | , WA (MWH) | Type of Clearance: | None |
| Departure Time: | 1625 PST | Type of Airspace: | Class G |

Airport Information

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|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|---------|
| Airport: | GRAND COULEE DAM (3W7) | Runway Surface Type: | Asphalt |
| Airport Elevation: | 1590 ft | Runway Surface Condition: | |
| Runway Used: | 0 | IFR Approach: | None |
| Runway Length/Width: | 4200 ft / 75 ft | VFR Approach/Landing: | |

Wreckage and Impact Information

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|---------------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------|
| Crew Injuries: | 2 Serious | Aircraft Damage: | Destroyed |
| Passenger Injuries: | N/A | Aircraft Fire: | None |
| Ground Injuries: | N/A | Aircraft Explosion: | None |
| Total Injuries: | 2 Serious | Latitude, Longitude: | |

Administrative Information

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|-----------------------------------|--|--------------|------------|
| Investigator In Charge (IIC): | DENNIS J HOGENSON | Report Date: | 05/22/2001 |
| Additional Participating Persons: | JULIE D LEE; SPOKANE, WA JEFFREY R POSCHWATTA; WILLIAMSPORT, PA BRIAN D CASSIDY; WICHITA, KS | | |
| 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](#).