



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	THIBODAUX, LA	Accident Number:	FTW00LA162
Date & Time:	06/01/2000, 0820 CDT	Registration:	N5028Q
Aircraft:	Air Tractor AT-401B	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 137: Agricultural		

Analysis

The pilot flew the agricultural airplane around the target area (crawfish pond) to be sprayed, 'looking for obstacles and wind direction.' The pilot made the first spray run from the north to the south, and the second pass from the south to north. After completing the second run, the pilot passed over power lines and executed a turn to the right and into the direction of the sun. According to the pilot, the sunlight and glare on the windscreen 'blocked my vision' temporarily. While still in the turn, the pilot regained 'forward vision' and realized the airplane was flying 'into the power lines.' After striking the power lines, the airplane came to rest upright in the crawfish pond.

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 power lines while maneuvering during an aerial application flight. A factor was the sunglare on the windscreen.

Findings

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

Findings

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

Factual Information

On June 1, 2000, at 0820 central daylight time, an Air Tractor AT-401B agricultural airplane, N5028Q, struck a power line during an aerial application flight near Thibodaux, Louisiana. The airplane was owned and operated by Golden Ranch Aviation, Inc., of Schriever, Louisiana, under 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 137. The commercial pilot, sole occupant, received serious injuries, and the airplane sustained substantial damage. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the local flight, and a flight plan was not filed. The flight originated approximately 0800 from the Golden Ranch Aviation, Inc., private airstrip.

According to the pilot's statement, the pilot circled the target area (a crawfish pond, located approximately 10-12 miles northwest of the airstrip) to be sprayed, "looking for obstacles and wind direction." The pilot made the first spray run from the north to the south, and the second pass from the south to north. After completing the second run, the pilot passed over power lines and executed a turn to the right and into the direction of the sun. According to the pilot, the sunlight and glare on the windscreen "blocked [his] vision" temporarily. While still in the turn, the pilot regained "forward vision" and realized the airplane was flying "into the power lines." After striking the power lines, the airplane came to rest upright in the crawfish pond.

According to the U.S. Naval Observatory Astronomical Applications Department, the official sunrise on June 1, 2000, occurred at 0603.

According to the FAA inspector, who examined the wreckage, the wings sustained spar damage, and the propeller was damaged.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	53, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Center
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt, Shoulder harness
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	03/03/2000
Occupational Pilot:	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:		
Flight Time:	12600 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1100 hours (Total, this make and model), 12544 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Air Tractor	Registration:	N5028Q
Model/Series:	AT-401B AT-401B	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Restricted	Serial Number:	401B-1028
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	1
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	12/21/1999, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	7800 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	5 Hours	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	535 Hours	Engine Manufacturer:	P&W
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	R1340-AN
Registered Owner:	GOLDEN RANCH AVIATION, INC.	Rated Power:	600 hp
Operator:	GOLDEN RANCH AVIATION, INC.	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	G6HG

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:	Clear / 0 ft agl	Visibility	10 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None / 0 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	Light and Variable /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	Variable	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	29° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	SCHRIEVER, LA (NONE)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	0800 CDT	Type of Airspace:	Class E

Wreckage and Impact Information

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

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): JOYCE ROACH **Report Date:** 12/04/2000

Additional Participating Persons: KELLY L TEAGUE; BATON ROUGE, LA

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

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), established in 1967, is an independent federal agency mandated by Congress through the Independent Safety Board Act of 1974 to investigate transportation accidents, determine the probable causes of the accidents, issue safety recommendations, study transportation safety issues, and evaluate the safety effectiveness of government agencies involved in transportation. The NTSB makes public its actions and decisions through accident reports, safety studies, special investigation reports, safety recommendations, and statistical reviews.

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](#).