



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	Hillsboro, AL	Accident Number:	ATL04CA146
Date & Time:	07/02/2004, 2005 CDT	Registration:	N9089L
Aircraft:	Air Tractor AT-402A	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Business		

Analysis

According to the pilot, the airplane collided with the top wire of a transmission tower that "was not visible to [him]." He stated that the airplane spun around 180 degrees to the left, the airplane "was out of control," collided with the ground, and came to rest inverted in a nearby field. Examination of the wreckage site revealed the wreckage debris path extended across the field a distance of 75 feet leading up to the main wreckage site. The tower arm of the transmission tower, that was estimated to be 100 feet high, was bent, and the upper transmission wire was separated. Examination of the wreckage revealed that the engine assembly separated from the engine mounts. The propeller hub was separated from the crankshaft. The engine cowling and fuselage were crushed aft to the pilot compartment. The right wingtip was separated. The leading edge of the right wing was crushed beginning about midspan outboard to the end of the wing. The left wing was partially separated at the root and completely separated approximately midspan. The left horizontal stabilizer leading edge was crushed aft.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's inadequate visual lookout and failure to maintain adequate obstacle clearance, which resulted in collision with transmission wires.

Findings

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

Findings

1. OBJECT - WIRE, TRANSMISSION
2. (C) VISUAL LOOKOUT - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (C) CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

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

Findings

4. TERRAIN CONDITION - CROP

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	27, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Single
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt, Shoulder harness
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	10/31/2003
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	02/10/2004
Flight Time:	3200 hours (Total, all aircraft), 100 hours (Total, this make and model), 100 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 50 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 7 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Air Tractor	Registration:	N9089L
Model/Series:	AT-402A	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Restricted; Normal	Serial Number:	402A-1118
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	1
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	02/07/2004, 100 Hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	7000 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	98 Hours	Engines:	1 Turbo Prop
Airframe Total Time:	2029 Hours at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Pratt & Whitney
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	PT6A
Registered Owner:	Buster Thornton	Rated Power:	680 hp
Operator:	Buster Thornton	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Dusk
Observation Facility, Elevation:	kdcu, 592 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	12 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	1953 CDT	Direction from Accident Site:	90°
Lowest Cloud Condition:		Visibility	10 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 3600 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	6 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	180°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.03 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	26° C / 23° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	Courtland, AL (9A4)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	1930 CDT	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	Lawrence County Airport (9A4)	Runway Surface Type:	Unknown
Airport Elevation:	588 ft	Runway Surface Condition:	Unknown
Runway Used:	NA	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	34.633333, -87.200000

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Philip Powell	Report Date:	06/28/2006
Additional Participating Persons:	Barry Ponder; Birmingham FSDO		
Publish Date:			
Note:	This accident report documents the factual circumstances of this accident as described to the NTSB.		
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](#).