



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	Jal, NM	Accident Number:	DEN05TA033
Date & Time:	12/01/2004, 0740 MST	Registration:	N734
Aircraft:	Piper PA-18-150	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None

Flight Conducted Under: Part 91: General Aviation - Aerial Observation

Analysis

The pilot elected to land on a paved road after circling three times to "check for obstacles and hazards." The pilot noted the power lines and "planned [his] final approach well above the power lines." During the final approach, the pilot lost sight of the power lines "due to the early morning sun." The main landing gear impacted one of the lines. Subsequently, the airplane impacted in a nose down attitude causing substantial damage.

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 the power lines. Contributing factors include the power lines, the sun glare, the pilot's reduced visual lookout, the pilot's improper in-flight planning and decision making and the pilot's failure to perform a go-around procedure after losing sight of the power lines.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT

Phase of Operation: LANDING

Findings

1. (F) OBJECT - WIRE,STATIC
2. (C) ALTITUDE/CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - SUNGLARE
4. (F) VISUAL LOOKOUT - RESTRICTED - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. (F) IN-FLIGHT PLANNING/DECISION - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND
6. (F) GO-AROUND - NOT PERFORMED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

7. TERRAIN CONDITION - GROUND

Factual Information

On December 1, 2004, at 0740 mountain standard time, a Piper PA-18-150, N734, operated by the United States Department of Agriculture, sustained substantial damage when it impacted a power line while landing on Delaware Basin Road, 20 nautical miles west of Jal, New Mexico. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time of the accident. The business flight was being conducted under the provisions of Title 14 CFR Part 91 without a flight plan. The commercial pilot reported no injuries. The cross-country flight originated from Roswell, New Mexico, at approximately 0635.

According to the accident report submitted by the pilot, he was en route to Brininstool Ranch to pick up a United States Department of Agriculture specialist. The ranch roads normally used for landing were muddy and lined with high vegetation. The pilot elected to land on Delaware Basin Road after circling the road three times to "check for obstacles and hazards." The pilot noted the power lines and "planned [his] final approach well above the power lines." During the final approach, the pilot lost sight of the power lines "due to the early morning sun." The main landing gear impacted one of the lines. Subsequently, the airplane impacted the ground in a nose down attitude, damaging the propeller and collapsing the main landing gear. The airplane came to a rest on the west side of the road. Both wing struts were bent aft longitudinally and the firewall was crushed and wrinkled. A postaccident examination of the airplane's systems, conducted by the FAA, revealed no anomalies.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Flight Instructor; Commercial	Age:	47, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt, Shoulder harness
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane Single-engine; Instrument Airplane	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	03/25/2004
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	02/25/2004
Flight Time:	15589 hours (Total, all aircraft), 9000 hours (Total, this make and model), 15380 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 87 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 32 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N734
Model/Series:	PA-18-150	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Restricted	Serial Number:	18-5258
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	10/12/2004, 100 Hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2000 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	45 Hours	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	6470 Hours at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	O-360-A4M
Registered Owner:	United States Department of Agriculture	Rated Power:	180 hp
Operator:	United States Department of Agriculture	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	INK, 2820 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	21 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	0753 MST	Direction from Accident Site:	180°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	5 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	90°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.23 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	2° C / -4° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	Roswell, NM (ROW)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Brininstool Ran, NM	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	0635 MST	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	NA	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	NA	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	Full Stop; Traffic Pattern

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:	32.065000, -103.558333

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Arnold W Scott	Report Date:	03/30/2005
Additional Participating Persons:	Mark W McDougall; FAA Flight Standards District Office; Lubbock, 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](#).