



# National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

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<b>Location:</b>	Mountain Pass, CA	<b>Accident Number:</b>	LAX07LA147
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	05/01/2007, 0715 PDT	<b>Registration:</b>	N169BC
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Ceridono Vegas Sport Flyer	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Destroyed
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

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## Analysis

The accident airplane was the second of two airplanes to takeoff for the intent of flying formation to another airport. The pilot of the first airplane reported that after takeoff, he made a turn to the north followed by a 360-degree turn to locate the second airplane. He saw the airplane following him around in the circle, and once he completed the circle, he again made a turn to the north and flew towards their destination. The first pilot thought that the accident pilot was following him, but when he arrived at their destination, he did not see the second airplane. The first pilot returned to the departure airport and noted a small fire off the end of the runway in the area where he had last seen the accident airplane. The first pilot stated that at no time during the flight did he hear a transmission from the accident pilot. There were no ground witnesses to the accident. The wreckage debris was in a confined area and came to rest about 30 feet from the ground scars constituting the first point of ground impact on the flat open terrain. The fuselage structure, cockpit, and engine suffered considerable impact and thermal damage. The airframe and engine were examined by FAA inspectors. Due to the impact and thermal damage only partial flight control continuity could be established. No preimpact mechanical malfunctions or failures were identified.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The loss of airplane control while maneuvering after takeoff for an undetermined reason.

## Findings

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Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT  
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

### Findings

1. (C) REASON FOR OCCURRENCE UNDETERMINED  
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Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER  
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

### Findings

2. TERRAIN CONDITION - GROUND

## Factual Information

### HISTORY OF FLIGHT

On May 1, 2007, about 0715 Pacific daylight time, an experimental Ceridono Vegas Sport Flyer airplane, N169BC, crashed into flat open desert terrain shortly after takeoff from Sky Ranch Airport (3L2), Sandy Valley, Nevada. The airplane came to rest about 1 1/2 miles south-southwest of the Nevada/California border. The pilot/owner/builder operated the airplane under the provisions of 14 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 91 as a personal flight. The pilot, the sole occupant, was killed; the airplane was destroyed by the post impact fire. Day visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the flight that departed about 0715, and was destined for Calvada Meadows Airport (NV74), Pahrump, Nevada.

According to a friend of the pilot, they were going to fly formation to Pahrump. The friend took off first in his airplane, with the accident pilot following him. After takeoff, he made a turn to the north followed by a 360-degree turn to locate the accident airplane. He saw the accident airplane following him around in the circle. Once he completed the circle, he again made a turn to the north and flew towards Pahrump. He thought the accident pilot was following him, but when he arrived at Pahrump he did not see the accident airplane. He flew back to Sky Ranch, and noted a small fire off the end of the runway in the area where he had last seen the accident airplane. After landing at Sky Ranch, fellow pilots informed him of the accident. The witness stated that at no time during the takeoff or flight had he spoken to or heard any radio transmissions from the accident pilot. There were no ground witnesses to the accident.

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) inspectors responded to the accident site from the Las Vegas Flight Standards District Office (FSDO). They reported that the airplane came to rest about 30 feet from the first identified point of contact (FIPC), on a magnetic heading of about 222 degrees. The FAA inspectors were able to establish flight control continuity of the rudder cables and elevator push/pull tubes, as well as from the flight control sticks and flap handle from the cockpit out to the aileron/flap mixing bell crank. They noted that due to thermal damage of the aluminum structure, flight control continuity from the aileron/flap mixing bell crank to the flaperons and to the engine controls could not be established. The cockpit and engine suffered substantial fire damage. The engine was facing in generally the opposite direction of the airplane with one of the three propeller blades still attached to the propeller hub. No further engine examination was performed.

According to Clark County Fire Department personnel, they responded to a brush fire (50 feet by 50 feet), and upon arrival found it surrounding the aircraft wreckage.

A person located at a residence about 1/2 mile from the accident site, stated that at 0720 he observed smoke emanating from the accident area. He drove out to the accident site, and then contacted the fire department to report a fire. The witness stated that the fire was so intense that he did not know it was an airplane. He did not hear or see the airplane accident.

### PERSONNEL INFORMATION

A review of FAA airman records revealed the 80-year-old pilot held a private pilot certificate with an airplane single engine land rating. The pilot also held a repairman experimental aircraft builder certificate for the accident airplane.

The pilot held a third-class medical certificate issued on November 07, 2006. It had the

limitations that the pilot must wear corrective lenses.

No personal flight records were made available to the National Transportation Safety Board. The aeronautical experience listed in this report was obtained from a review of the FAA Airman and Medical Records. These records indicated a total time of 400 hours with 40 hours logged in the last 6 months. The pilot's medical record also reflected that his eyesight (distant and near vision) in each eye separately and both eyes together was 20/100 corrected to 20/40.

#### AIRCRAFT INFORMATION

The high wing two-seat experimental airplane was a 1998 Ceridono Vegas Sport Flyer, serial number 01. A Subaru EA-81 engine powered the airplane. A review of the aircraft logbook revealed an entry on March 16, 2006. The owner/mechanic had completed an annual inspection, and returned the airplane to service in an airworthy condition. In the annual inspection, he noted that the turbocharger experienced a "loss of turbo boost." When he inspected the turbocharger, he found a crack on the mounting flange. He installed a replacement turbocharger and there were no further mechanical problems encountered.

#### MEDICAL AND PATHOLOGICAL INFORMATION

The San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department Coroner Division performed an autopsy on the pilot on May 4, 2007. The cause of death was listed as an accident due to "multiple blunt force trauma and thermal injuries, seconds." The FAA Forensic Toxicology Research Team, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, performed a toxicological analysis from samples obtained during the autopsy. Toxicological testing for carbon monoxide and cyanide were not performed. The results of the analysis of the specimens were negative for volatiles. The results for tested drugs were positive for diltiazem, which was present in both the liver and kidney.

A review of the pilot's FAA airman medical records and toxicology findings by the Safety Board's medical officer revealed that the pilot had borderline high-blood pressure, and was taking diltiazem. Diltiazem is commonly used for high blood pressure, and commonly approved by the FAA for that use. The medical officer further noted that the pilot, since 1991, on his airman medical application had routinely indicated a "no" response to the question "Do You Currently Use Any Medication."

According to the pilot's girlfriend, the pilot was in excellent health and was not sick at the time of the accident. He had woken up the morning of the accident, and was looking forward to the flight.

## Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	80, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Unknown
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 With Waivers/Limitations	Last Medical Exam:	11/01/2006
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	09/01/2006
Flight Time:	327 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Manufacturer:	Ceridono	Registration:	N169BC
Model/Series:	Vegas Sport Flyer	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	Yes
Airworthiness Certificate:	Experimental	Serial Number:	01
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	01/01/2005, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1350 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	Subaru
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	EA-81
Registered Owner:	Robert A. Ceridono	Rated Power:	73 hp
Operator:	Robert A. Ceridono	Air Carrier Operating Certificate:	None

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Observation Facility, Elevation:	HND, 2492 ft msl	Observation Time:	0756 PDT
Distance from Accident Site:	26 Nautical Miles	Condition of Light:	Day
Direction from Accident Site:	60°	Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Temperature/Dew Point:	25° C / -8° C
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility	10 Miles
Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	7 knots, 160°	Visibility (RVR):	
Altimeter Setting:	29.96 inches Hg	Visibility (RVV):	
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Sandy Valley, NV (3L2)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Pahrump, NV (NV74)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	0710 PDT	Type of Airspace:	

## Airport Information

<b>Airport:</b>	Sky Ranch (3L2)	<b>Runway Surface Type:</b>	
<b>Airport Elevation:</b>	2599 ft	<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	
<b>Runway Used:</b>	NA	<b>IFR Approach:</b>	None
<b>Runway Length/Width:</b>		<b>VFR Approach/Landing:</b>	None

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Destroyed
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	On-Ground
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal		

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Tealeye C Cornejo	<b>Adopted Date:</b>	05/28/2008
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	Eric Barr; Federal Aviation Administration; Las Vegas, NV		
<b>Publish Date:</b>			
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	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 <a href="mailto:pubinq@ntsb.gov">pubinq@ntsb.gov</a> , or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at <a href="http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/">http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/</a> .		

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