



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

Location:	El Paso, TX	Accident Number:	CEN12LA605
Date & Time:	09/01/2012, 1100 MDT	Registration:	N5489X
Aircraft:	BURKHART GROB G 103 TWIN II	Injuries:	1 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Glider Tow		

Analysis

The glider club was launching gliders via a mechanical ground winch. On the first launch attempt, the glider overflowed the tow cable and it automatically disconnected when the glider was low to the ground. The glider was able to make a safe landing on the runway. The pilot was overheard saying that the first launch failed because he should have initiated the climb sooner. On the second attempt, the glider once again overran the tow cable. Before the tow cable released, the pilot lowered the nose to pick up the slack in the cable and he instructed the winch operator to go faster. These two steps appeared to have corrected the problem, and the pilot initiated a climb. Shortly after, the glider began to overfly the cable again and it disconnected. The glider entered free flight just above stall speed about 75 feet above the runway. A witness saw the glider nose over and thought the pilot was going to land. Instead, the glider descended rapidly and drifted to the left toward a taxiway. The witness saw the wings of the glider rock back and forth before it impacted the ground hard. Examination of the glider and release hook revealed no mechanical anomalies. The ground winch's engine was reportedly running rough and most likely was unable to produce enough speed to launch the glider.

Flight Events

Takeoff - Glider tow event
Takeoff - Loss of control in flight

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's failure to maintain glider control while attempting to take off using a ground winch, which resulted in an inadvertent stall low to the ground. Contributing to the accident was the ground winch, which was unable to produce enough speed for a successful glider launch.

Findings

Aircraft-Aircraft handling/service-Towing and taxiing-Towing-Related operating info - C
Aircraft-Aircraft oper/perf/capability-Performance/control parameters-Airspeed-Not attained/maintained - F
Aircraft-Fluids/misc hardware-Misc hardware-(general)-Not specified - F
Personnel issues-Task performance-Use of equip/info-Aircraft control-Pilot - C

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Flight Instructor; Commercial	Age:	76
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land	Instrument Rating(s):	None
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Glider	Instructor Rating(s):	Glider
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 1500 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Manufacturer:	BURKHART GROB	Registration:	N5489X
Model/Series:	G 103 TWIN II	Engines:	0
Operator:	EL PASO SOARING SOCIETY INC	Engine Manufacturer:	
Air Carrier Operating Certificate:	None	Engine Model/Series:	
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Glider Tow		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Observation Facility, Elevation:	ELP, 4007 ft msl	Weather Information Source:	Unknown
Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Lowest Ceiling:	
Condition of Light:	Day	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	4 knots, 150°
Temperature:	30°C / 6°C	Visibility	10 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	El Paso, TX (T27)	Destination:	El Paso, TX (T27)

Airport Information

Airport:	Horizon Airport (T27)	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Runway Used:	08	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Length/Width:	6885 ft / 50 ft		

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Leah D Yeager	Adopted Date:	06/19/2013
Investigation Docket:	http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/search/dockList.cfm?mKey=84928		

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