



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

Location:	Hempstead, TX	Accident Number:	CEN15LA376
Date & Time:	08/23/2015, 1337 CDT	Registration:	N878S
Aircraft:	SCHLEICHER ASW 20	Injuries:	1 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The commercial pilot was conducting a personal local flight in the glider. The tow pilot reported that the glider was uneventfully towed to and released at the prearranged altitude of 2,000 ft above ground level (agl). GPS data from the glider showed that it flew patterns consistent with maneuvers to gain altitude in areas of lift. The remainder of the glider's flight was downward and it did not reach an altitude greater than about 300 ft agl during the remaining flight segment, indicating that the pilot was likely attempting an off-airport landing. The data then showed that the glider flew into an area bounded by power lines and then the recording stopped. After a power interruption on the ground was detected, the glider was found near damaged power lines. An examination of the wreckage revealed no preimpact anomalies. A family member indicated that the pilot made a cell phone call during the accident flight; however, the cell phone did not have any record of a call being made during the flight.

Although the pilot's autopsy revealed that he had significant coronary artery disease and left ventricular hypertrophy, which is most often a result of longstanding hypertension, no evidence was found indicating that a recent coronary ischemia had occurred. Thus, it is unlikely that the pilot's cardiac disease caused any symptoms that contributed to the accident. Based on the evidence, it is likely that the glider pilot attempted an off-airport landing and failed to maintain clearance from the power lines.

Flight Events

Landing - Collision during takeoff/land
Uncontrolled descent - Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

The pilot's failure to maintain clearance from power lines during an attempted off-airport landing.

Findings

Aircraft-Aircraft oper/perf/capability-Performance/control parameters-Altitude-Not attained/maintained - C
 Personnel issues-Psychological-Attention/monitoring-Monitoring environment-Pilot - C
 Environmental issues-Physical environment-Object/animal/substance-Wire-Effect on operation - C

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	67
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Glider	Instructor Rating(s):	None
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 505 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	SCHLEICHER	Registration:	N878S
Model/Series:	ASW 20 NO SERIES	Engines:	0
Operator:	On file	Engine Manufacturer:	
Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None	Engine Model/Series:	
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KDWH, 152 ft msl	Weather Information Source:	Weather Observation Facility
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	Light and Variable / , Variable
Temperature:	33° C	Visibility	10 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	WALLER, TX (89TA)	Destination:	WALLER, TX (89TA)

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
Latitude, Longitude:	30.111944, -96.038056 (est)		

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Edward F Malinowski	Adopted Date:	02/13/2017
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.		
Investigation Docket:	http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/search/dockList.cfm?mKey=91848		

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.

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