



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Sterling, Massachusetts	Accident Number:	ERA21LA266
Date & Time:	May 20, 2021, 16:00 Local	Registration:	N65317
Aircraft:	Pilatus B4-PC11	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Controlled flight into terr/obj (CFIT)	Injuries:	1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot reported that once on final approach for the runway, he miscalculated his approach angle and found the glider low on altitude and airspeed. The glider then struck trees on the edge of the airport and impacted on the airport surface resulting in substantial damage to the fuselage. The pilot reported no mechanical malfunctions or anomalies that would have precluded normal operation.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

The pilot’s misjudged approach angle which resulted in impact with trees and terrain.

Findings

Personnel issues	Identification/recognition - Pilot
Personnel issues	Aircraft control - Pilot
Aircraft	Descent/approach/glide path - Not attained/maintained

Factual Information

History of Flight

Approach-VFR pattern final	Miscellaneous/other
Approach-VFR pattern final	Controlled flight into terr/obj (CFIT) (Defining event)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	62, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Single
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Glider	Restraint Used:	5-point
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 3 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	October 24, 2020
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	April 12, 2021
Flight Time:	250 hours (Total, all aircraft), 2 hours (Total, this make and model), 150 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 5 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Pilatus	Registration:	N65317
Model/Series:	B4-PC11	Aircraft Category:	Glider
Year of Manufacture:	1976	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	190
Landing Gear Type:	None	Seats:	1
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	May 2, 2021 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	770 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	0
Airframe Total Time:	3589 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	
Registered Owner:	GREATER BOSTON SOARING CLUB INC	Rated Power:	
Operator:	GREATER BOSTON SOARING CLUB INC	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KFIT,348 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	8 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	15:52 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	360°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	6 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	130°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.44 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	27°C / 0°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Sterling, MA	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Sterling, MA	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:		Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	STERLING 3B3	Runway Surface Type:	Grass/turf
Airport Elevation:	459 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry;Soft;Vegetation
Runway Used:	16	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	3086 ft / 40 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Full stop;Traffic pattern

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	42.425917,-71.792861(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Gunther, Todd
Additional Participating Persons:	Kevin Godbout ; FAA / FSDO; Bradley, CT
Original Publish Date:	May 17, 2022
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 4
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=103328

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The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person” (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available [here](#).