



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	NILAND, California	Accident Number:	LAX88DUM05
Date & Time:	July 21, 1988, 20:45 Local	Registration:	N8719S
Aircraft:	AIR TRACTOR AT-301	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 137: Agricultural		

Analysis

JUST AFTER TAKEOFF, THE PILOT MADE A RIGHT TURN TO LOCATE THE GROUND FLAGGERS AND TO AVOID TRANSMISSION WIRES. THE PILOT, UNABLE TO LOCATE THE FLAGGERS, INITIATED A CLIMB TO AVOID WIRES AND RISING TERRAIN. HOWEVER, THE AIRPLANE DID NOT GAIN SUFFICIENT ALTITUDE AND COLLIDED WITH THE WIRES AND, SUBSEQUENTLY, THE TERRAIN. THERE WERE NO REPORTED MECHANICAL FAILURES OR MALFUNCTIONS OF THE AIRPLANE.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING - AERIAL APPLICATION

Findings

1. (F) OBJECT - WIRE, TRANSMISSION
 2. (C) IN-FLIGHT PLANNING/DECISION - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND
 3. (C) ALTITUDE - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
 4. (F) DIVERTED ATTENTION - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial; Flight instructor	Age:	42, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Center
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane single-engine	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	December 11, 1987
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	8373 hours (Total, all aircraft), 3967 hours (Total, this make and model), 8218 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 71 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 35 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 3 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	AIR TRACTOR	Registration:	N8719S
Model/Series:	AT-301 AT-301	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Restricted (Special)	Serial Number:	301-0178
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	1
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	April 28, 1988 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	5000 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	73 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	4665 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	P&W
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	R-340-AN1
Registered Owner:	VALAIR COMPANY, INC.	Rated Power:	600 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	LSVG

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Night/bright
Observation Facility, Elevation:		Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:		Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown	Visibility	20 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 12000 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	0°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	35°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:		Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	20:43 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:	0 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	0 ft / 0 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	33.300529,-115.549667(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Merrill, W.

Additional Participating Persons: DONALD S SCARFONE; SAN DIEGO , CA

Original Publish Date: December 29, 1989

Last Revision Date:

Investigation Class: [Class](#)

Note:

Investigation Docket: <https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=25733>

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

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](#).