



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

<b>Location:</b>	CELINA, Tennessee	<b>Accident Number:</b>	ATL94LA067
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	March 23, 1994, 07:30 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N76342
<b>Aircraft:</b>	CESSNA 140	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Destroyed
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal, 1 Minor
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

## Analysis

THE STUDENT PILOT REPORTED THAT HE WAS FLYING LOW, OVER THE CUMBERLAND RIVER, WHEN THE AIRCRAFT COLLIDED WITH A POWER LINE. HE LOST CONTROL OF THE AIRPLANE, AND IT CRASHED INTO THE RIVER. HIS PASSENGER, WHO WAS NOT A PILOT, WAS FATALLY INJURED. THE PILOT WAS ISSUED HIS STUDENT CERTIFICATE 12 DAYS PRIOR TO THE ACCIDENT, AND AT THAT TIME REPORTED A TOTAL FLIGHT TIME OF 385 HOURS. AN INSPECTION OF THE WRECKAGE REVEALED NO EVIDENCE OF MECHANICAL FAILURE OR MALFUNCTION. THE WIRE WHICH WAS SEVERED BY THE AIRPLANE WAS ERECTED ABOUT 90 FEET ABOVE THE SURFACE OF THE RIVER.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE PILOT'S FAILURE TO MAINTAIN A PROPER ALTITUDE, AND HIS FAILURE TO MAINTAIN CLEARANCE FROM THE TRANSMISSION WIRE.

## Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT  
Phase of Operation: CRUISE

### Findings

1. OBJECT - WIRE, TRANSMISSION
2. (C) PROPER ALTITUDE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

3. (C) CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

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Occurrence #2: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT

Phase of Operation: CRUISE

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Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

## Factual Information

On March 23, 1993, at about 0730 central standard time, a Cessna 140, N76342, collided with a power line during cruise flight near Celina, Tennessee. The non-rated pilot had minor injuries, and his passenger was fatally injured. The aircraft was destroyed. The aircraft was operated under 14 CFR Part 91 by the pilot. Visual meteorological conditions existed at the time, and no flight plan was filed for the personal flight. The flight originated in Gainesboro, Tennessee, at an unknown time.

The pilot reported to law enforcement personnel that he was flying low, over the Cumberland River, when the aircraft collided with a power line. He lost aircraft control, and the aircraft crashed into the river.

An inspector from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) visited the accident site and inspected the aircraft after it was recovered from the river. He reported that the power line was severed at a point that was approximately 90 feet above the surface of the water. Details of his wreckage examination are included in the inspector's written statement as an attachment to this report.

The pilot was issued a student pilot and third class medical certificate on March 11, 1994. According to FAA records, he was not rated in any airplane. On his certificate application, he reported a total flying time of 385 hours. The passenger did not possess any pilot certificates or ratings.

### Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Student	<b>Age:</b>	46,Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Unknown
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	No
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 2 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	March 11, 1994
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	UNK	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	
<b>Flight Time:</b>	385 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	CESSNA	<b>Registration:</b>	N76342
<b>Model/Series:</b>	140 140	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Airplane
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	10759
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Tailwheel	<b>Seats:</b>	2
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	Unknown	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	1500 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>		<b>Engines:</b>	1 Reciprocating
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>		<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	CONTINENTAL
<b>ELT:</b>		<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	C-85-12
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	VASSILEV, JAMES H.	<b>Rated Power:</b>	85 Horsepower
<b>Operator:</b>	VASSILEV, JAMES H.	<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None
<b>Operator Does Business As:</b>		<b>Operator Designator Code:</b>	

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual (VMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	8A3 ,1370 ft msl	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	12 Nautical Miles
<b>Observation Time:</b>	07:40 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	130°
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Clear	<b>Visibility</b>	10 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	None	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	6 knots / None	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Wind Direction:</b>	200°	<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	30 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	17°C / -1°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	GAINESBORO (1A7 )	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	None
<b>Destination:</b>		<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>	00:00 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class G

## Airport Information

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

## Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Fatal, 1 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	36.540962,-85.499221(est)

## Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Hicks, Ralph
Additional Participating Persons:	ROBERT D DAVIDSON; NASHVILLE , TN
Original Publish Date:	November 14, 1994
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	<a href="#">Class</a>
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	<a href="https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=3360">https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=3360</a>

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](#).