



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	ST CLAIR, Alabama	Accident Number:	MIA96LA226
Date & Time:	September 5, 1996, 17:00 Local	Registration:	N8563S
Aircraft:	Air Tractor 301	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 137: Agricultural		

Analysis

Witnesses observed the aircraft maneuvering and heard an engine power reduction. The aircraft then descended in a nose down attitude and crashed. There was evidence that the aircraft impacted in a relatively slow speed, but with power being provided to the propeller. Postcrash examination of the aircraft structure, flight controls, engine, and propeller did not reveal any pre-crash failure or malfunction.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: failure of the pilot to maintain adequate airspeed, while maneuvering, which resulted in an inadvertent stall and uncontrolled descent to ground.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING - AERIAL APPLICATION

- Findings
1. (C) AIRSPEED - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
 2. (C) STALL/SPIN - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Factual Information

On September 5, 1996, about 1700 central daylight time, a Air Tractor AT-310, N8563S, registered to Davco Aviation, Inc., crashed near St. Clair, Alabama, while on a Title 14 CFR Part 137 aerial application flight. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time and no flight plan was filed. The aircraft was destroyed and the commercial-rated pilot received serious injuries. The flight originated from St. Clair, the same day, about 1610.

Witnesses report to Lowndes County Sheriff Department officers that they observed the aircraft flying and the engine suddenly cut off. The aircraft crashed and about 15 seconds later they heard an explosion.

Examination of the crash site by FAA inspectors showed the aircraft crashed in a nose-down attitude while at a slow speed. The leading edge of each wing was crushed aft. The propeller had damage consistent with a propeller being turned by engine power at the time of ground impact. A postcrash fire erupted in the nose and center wing areas. Examination of the engine by FAA inspectors showed no evidence of precrash mechanical failure or malfunction of the engine.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	44, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	July 26, 1997
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	5211 hours (Total, all aircraft), 4391 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 5 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Air Tractor	Registration:	N8563S
Model/Series:	301 301	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Restricted (Special)	Serial Number:	301-0146
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	1
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	June 2, 1996 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	7800 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	154 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	6301 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	P&W
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	R-1340-AN1
Registered Owner:	DAVCO AVIATION, INC.	Rated Power:	600 Horsepower
Operator:	FARM AIR, INC.	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	F3MG

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument (IMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	MGM ,221 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	25 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	16:53 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	90°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	7 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	70°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	29°C / 20°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:		Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	16:10 Local	Type of Airspace:	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 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	On-ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	On-ground
Total Injuries:	1 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Kennedy, Jeffrey
Additional Participating Persons:	GAIL LIEURANCE; BIRMINGHAM , AL GERALD W DOZIER; JACKSON , MS
Original Publish Date:	May 30, 1997
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=38084

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