



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

<b>Location:</b>	WADSWORTH, Ohio	<b>Accident Number:</b>	NYC97LA084
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	September 25, 1996, 16:00 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N9775
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Schempp-Hirth      CIRRUS-S	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	1 None
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

## Analysis

This was second flight of the day for the pilot/owner of the glider. The first flight lasted about 5 minutes, because the pilot stated that he could not gain any altitude, and he landed back at the airport. During the second takeoff, the pilot noticed the speed brakes were deployed. When he retracted the speed brakes, the glider 'popped up' higher than the tow plane, and the pilot released the tow rope. The pilot believed that he was too low to make it back to the airport, and went under telephone wires onto a road. The glider then ground-looped, and the left wing trailing edge struck a tree and the glider's tail broke midway down the tail cone. The pilot stated that there was the possibility that he may have bumped the speed brake handle.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's inadvertent activation of the speed brakes while being towed for takeoff. Subsequently, the glider pilot lost sight of the tow airplane due to excessive altitude, released the tow rope, and performed an off airport landing during which the glider collided with a tree.

## Findings

Occurrence #1: MISCELLANEOUS/OTHER  
Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - INITIAL CLIMB

### Findings

1. (C) SPEED BRAKES - INADVERTENT ACTIVATION - PILOT IN COMMAND

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Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT  
Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY LANDING AFTER TAKEOFF

Findings

2. OBJECT - TREE(S)

## Factual Information

On September 25, 1996, about 1600 eastern daylight time, a Schempp-Hirth Cirrus-S, N9775, a glider, was substantially damaged during a collision with trees after takeoff at the Wadsworth Municipal Airport, Wadsworth, Ohio. The certificated private pilot was not injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and no flight plan had been filed for the personal flight conducted under 14 CFR Part 91.

In a State Police report, taken on September 25, 1996, the pilot stated that during the accident flight, while being towed for takeoff, he noticed the speed brakes had deployed.

He further stated:

"...When I closed the drag brakes, my altitude popped up quickly, so I was higher than the tow plane, maybe 50' [feet] high. I released the tow rope and shoved the stick forward to maintain flying speed, but was too low to get back to [the] field. I went down on a road under telephone wires. The glider ground-looped, and the left wing trailing edge hit a tree and the tail broke midway down the tail cone..."

In a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Inspector's report, he stated that the accident was reported to the FAA by the pilot, on April 24, 1997. The FAA Inspector's report stated that the pilot/owner of the glider said that the accident flight was his second flight of the day. During his first flight, which lasted about 5 minutes, he could not gain any altitude and landed back at the Wadsworth Municipal Airport.

The Inspector's report also stated that the pilot said that he had not experienced speed brake deployment in the accident glider, but had in other gliders. The pilot also said that there was the possibility that he may have inadvertently bumped the speed brake handle.

## Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Private	<b>Age:</b>	68, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine land	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Center
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	Glider	<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 3 Valid Medical-w/ waivers/lim	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	January 31, 1995
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	No	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	
<b>Flight Time:</b>	520 hours (Total, all aircraft), 31 hours (Total, this make and model), 424 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 9 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 3 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Schempp-Hirth	<b>Registration:</b>	N9775
<b>Model/Series:</b>	CIRRUS-S CIRRUS-S	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Glider
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Utility	<b>Serial Number:</b>	106
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Retractable - Tailwheel	<b>Seats:</b>	1
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	April 20, 1996 Annual	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	728 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>	12 Hrs	<b>Engines:</b>	Unknown
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	1247 Hrs	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	
<b>ELT:</b>	Not installed	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	WILLIAM L. HINKS	<b>Rated Power:</b>	
<b>Operator:</b>		<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>		<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	
<b>Observation Time:</b>		<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Scattered	<b>Visibility</b>	8 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	None	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	/	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Wind Direction:</b>	0°	<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>		<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	27°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	(3G3 )	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	None
<b>Destination:</b>		<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>	15:58 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class E

## Airport Information

<b>Airport:</b>	WADSWORTH MUNICIPAL 3G3	<b>Runway Surface Type:</b>	
<b>Airport Elevation:</b>	980 ft msl	<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	
<b>Runway Used:</b>	0	<b>IFR Approach:</b>	
<b>Runway Length/Width:</b>		<b>VFR Approach/Landing:</b>	Precautionary landing

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 None	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>		<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	1 None	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	41.020763,-81.730972(est)

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Pearce, Robert
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	WALTER J MOOR; CLEVELAND , OH
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	February 2, 1998
<b>Last Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Investigation Class:</b>	<a href="#">Class</a>
<b>Note:</b>	
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	<a href="https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=39351">https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=39351</a>

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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](#).