



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	DOUGLAS, Washington	Accident Number:	SEA98LA155
Date & Time:	July 3, 1998, 14:00 Local	Registration:	N707NL
Aircraft:	Burkhart Grob G102	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot stated that the accident occurred while he was making an off-airport landing. He attempted to land next to a road in a plowed field. The terrain was rolling wheat fields, alternately plowed and in use. He stated that he was circling a house, looking for lift, when he made the decision to land. He widened his circle and flew north, parallel to the road. There was no indication of high winds, and he didn't have to crab the aircraft to correct his track over the ground. He stated that he turned toward the road and as he passed the mid-point of his turn to the intended final approach, he realized that he was being carried into the power wires on the far side of the road. He was at wire height and in about a 45 degree bank. He didn't think he could get over the wires and didn't want to increase bank angle, so he flew under the wires at about a 30 degree angle to the road. The right wingtip struck the pole, spinning the glider. He said the glider came to a stop, with its tail pointed 180 degrees from the direction of travel in the edge of a wheat field. He noted that within 30 minutes a thunderstorm came through the area.

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 clearance from objects on the ground. Factors include misjudgment of weather conditions (unfavorable winds).

Findings

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

Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - UNFAVORABLE WIND
2. (C) CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) WEATHER EVALUATION - MISJUDGED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

On July 3, 1998, approximately 1400 Pacific daylight time, a Grob G102 glider, N707NL, registered to and operated by the Boeing Employees Soaring Club, Inc., and being flown by a commercial pilot, incurred substantial damage when one of the aircraft's wingtips struck a pole while landing, approximately 12 miles east of Douglas, Washington. The pilot was uninjured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and no flight plan had been filed. The flight, which was personal in nature, was to have been operated under 14CFR91, and originated as a round-robin glider flight from Ephrata, Washington.

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Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	46, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Single-engine sea	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Glider	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	April 21, 1997
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	826 hours (Total, all aircraft), 50 hours (Total, this make and model), 764 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 46 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 37 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Burkhart Grob	Registration:	N707NL
Model/Series:	G102 G102	Aircraft Category:	Glider
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	1018
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tailwheel	Seats:	1
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	March 14, 1998 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	990 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	19 Hrs	Engines:	Unknown
Airframe Total Time:	1307 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	
Registered Owner:	BOEING EMPLOYEES SOARING CLUB	Rated Power:	
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	MWH ,1185 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	31 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	13:52 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	122°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	12 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	220°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	29°C / 17°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	EPHRATA , WA (EPH)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	13:00 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:	Precautionary landing

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:	47.690498,-119.880867(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): McCreary, Steven

Additional Participating Persons: DAVID LEHMAN; SEATTLE, WA
MICHAEL L STOCKHILL; SEATTLE, WA

Original Publish Date: January 11, 2000

Last Revision Date:

Investigation Class: [Class](#)

Note:

Investigation Docket: <https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=43712>

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](#).