



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Holtville, California	Accident Number:	LAX01LA078
Date & Time:	January 18, 2001,	Registration:	N8927Q
Aircraft:	Ayres S2R-T34	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Serious, 1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 137: Agricultural		

Analysis

The airplane was engaged in a series of aerial application passes over a crop field when it struck a set of utility lines on a pass from the west. The pilot was unaware of a second, lower set of lines located just beneath the first. The pilot lost control of the airplane and it descended to the field. The airplane is configured to seat only the pilot; however, an unrestrained passenger was also aboard. The passenger was ejected during the impact sequence.

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 the wires. Contributing to the accident was the pilot's inadequate preflight inspection.

Findings

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

Findings

1. OBJECT - WIRE, TRANSMISSION
2. (C) CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) PREFLIGHT PLANNING/PREPARATION - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Factual Information

On January 18, 2001, at 1542 Pacific standard time, an Ayres S2R-T34, N8927Q, collided with utility lines and crashed in an agricultural field near Holtville, California. The commercial pilot received minor injuries while the unseated passenger received serious injuries. The airplane sustained substantial damage. The aircraft was being operated as an agricultural application flight under the provisions of 14 CFR Part 137. The local flight originated from the Stoker Company agricultural strip in Imperial, California. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time. A flight plan had not been filed.

The pilot told Imperial County Sheriff's Department deputies that he was spraying a carrot field. As he approached the field from the west, the pilot flew under the utility lines that ran along Meloland Road but hit the second and lower set of lines. He was not aware of this set of utility lines and [just] heard a loud noise, lost control of the airplane, and impacted the ground in the center of the field. The unrestrained passenger was ejected from the cockpit.

Deputies had found the lower set of utility lines broken. The upper section of the vertical stabilizer had been separated from the airplane.

A post crash investigation revealed that the passenger was a maintenance employee with the company. The airplane was configured to accommodate a single pilot.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	55, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Center
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):		Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Unknown	Last FAA Medical Exam:	March 21, 2000
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	March 29, 2000
Flight Time:	10000 hours (Total, all aircraft), 3000 hours (Total, this make and model), 9000 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 300 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 100 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 5 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Ayres	Registration:	N8927Q
Model/Series:	S2R-T34	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Restricted (Special)	Serial Number:	2442R
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	1
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	January 16, 2001 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	6000 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	0 Hrs	Engines:	1 Turbo prop
Airframe Total Time:	14262 Hrs as of last inspection	Engine Manufacturer:	Pratt & Whitney
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	PT6A-34AG
Registered Owner:	Stoker Company	Rated Power:	750 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	LSWG

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	IPL,-56 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	3 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	14:53 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	280°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	7 knots / None	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	360°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.21 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	17°C / -9°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Holtville, CA (IPL)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	15:30 Local	Type of Airspace:	Unknown

Airport Information

Airport:	Stoker Company Airstrip N/A	Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	Unknown
Runway Used:		IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious, 1 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	32.82949,-115.190055(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Crispin, Robert
Additional Participating Persons:	ARTHUR LAWLER; FAA FLT STANDARDS DIST OFC; SAN DIEGO, CA
Original Publish Date:	December 6, 2002
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	The NTSB traveled to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=51357

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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](#).