



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Las Vegas, Nevada	Accident Number:	LAX01LA246
Date & Time:	July 12, 2001, 15:35 Local	Registration:	N4326H
Aircraft:	Mooney M20J	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

During taxi the airplane collided with a pole. The fixed based operator (FBO) stated that the aircraft was behind the "follow me" golf cart and passed through an opening between a parked aircraft and a metal pole. The total distance between the parked aircraft and the pole was measured at 78 feet, and the wing span on the accident aircraft was measured at 35 feet. The pilot stated while taxiing behind the "follow me" golf cart he was distracted by ground control who was trying to provide him with a telephone number to contact tower after securing his aircraft.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's inadequate visual lookout and failure to maintain proper clearance from an object. A factor was the pilot's distraction by a conversation with ground control.

Findings

Occurrence #1: ON GROUND/WATER COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: TAXI - FROM LANDING

Findings

1. OBJECT - POLE
2. (C) VISUAL LOOKOUT - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND

3. (F) DIVERTED ATTENTION - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (C) CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

On July 12, 2001, at 1535 hours Pacific daylight time, a Mooney M20J, N4326H, collided with a pole while taxiing to parking at McCarran International Airport, Las Vegas, Nevada. The airplane sustained substantial damage; however, the certificated private pilot, the sole occupant, was not injured. The airplane was owned and operated by the pilot under the provisions of 14 CFR Part 91 when the accident occurred. The personal cross-country flight had originated in Fullerton, California, and departed at an unknown time. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time, and no flight plan was on file.

According to the fixed base operator (FBO), the pilot was behind a "follow me" golf cart en route to parking. As the cart passed through an opening between a parked airplane on the right and a metal pole on the left, the left wing of the accident airplane struck the metal pole, as well as a nearby fire extinguisher. The lateral distance between the closest wing tip of the parked airplane on the right and the metal pole on the left was measured at 78 feet. The wing span on the accident airplane is 35 feet.

The pilot stated that he was behind the "follow me" golf cart, but struck the pole when he became distracted from ground control who was attempting to provide him with a telephone number to call after securing his airplane. According to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the controllers wanted to discuss an air space violation that had occurred while the pilot was en route to McCarran Field.

A postaccident inspection of the left wing by an FAA inspector revealed that four left wing ribs were bent back to the spar, and the spar was bent aft.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	71, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	June 30, 2000
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	May 23, 2000
Flight Time:			

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Mooney	Registration:	N4326H
Model/Series:	M20J	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	24-0707
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	3950 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	IO-360-A3BB0
Registered Owner:	Thomas Francis Fessler	Rated Power:	200 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KLAS,2181 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:	14:56 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 12000 ft AGL	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	8 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	50°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.92 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	39°C / 9°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Fullerton, CA (FUL)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Las Vegas, NV (LAS)	Type of Clearance:	Unknown
Departure Time:	15:35 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class B

Airport Information

Airport:	McCarron International LAS	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	2181 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:		IFR Approach:	Unknown
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	Unknown

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:	36.080833,-115.151947

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Crispin, Robert
Additional Participating Persons:	Richard Nardone; LAS FSDO, FAA; Las Vegas, NV
Original Publish Date:	May 1, 2003
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	The NTSB traveled to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=52697

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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](#).