



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	El Paso, Texas	Accident Number:	FTW02CA206
Date & Time:	July 13, 2002, 15:30 Local	Registration:	N7791V
Aircraft:	Aero Commander Callair A-9B	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Other work use		

Analysis

While attempting to land, the pilot saw a dust devil approximately 50 to 100 feet directly in front of him over the runway. Being too low to turn, he applied full power and attempted to fly through the dust devil. When the airplane pitched up and went into a left climbing turn, he applied full right aileron and rudder in an attempt to control the airplane. Witnesses observed the airplane pitch up and make a 270 degree left turn. The airplane became inverted and impacted the ground on its nose, bounced, and came to rest on its main landing gear.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the loss of control due to the encounter with the dust devil.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER
Phase of Operation: APPROACH - VFR PATTERN - FINAL APPROACH

- Findings
1. (C) WEATHER CONDITION - DUST DEVIL/WHIRLWIND
 2. AIRCRAFT CONTROL - NOT POSSIBLE - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

3. TERRAIN CONDITION - GROUND

Factual Information

On July 13, 2002, approximately 1530 mountain daylight time, an Aero Commander Callair A-9B single-engine airplane, N7791V, was substantially damaged when it impacted terrain following an encounter with a dust devil during landing at the West Texas Airport near El Paso, Texas. The airplane was registered to and operated by the El Paso Soaring Society of El Paso. The airline transport pilot, sole occupant of the airplane, sustained serious injuries. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and a flight plan was not filed for the 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 glider tow flight. The local flight originated from the West Texas Airport, approximately 1510.

The pilot reported that while attempting to land on runway 8, he saw a dust devil approximately 50 to 100 feet directly in front of him over the runway. Due to heavy rain, which had passed through the area, the dust devils were not picking up sand as usual. All he saw was a couple of sheets of flying paper. Being too low to turn, he applied full power and attempted to fly through the dust devil. When the airplane pitched up and went into a left climbing turn due to the cyclonic effect, he applied full right aileron and rudder in an attempt to control the airplane.

Witnesses observed the airplane pitch up and make a 270 degree left turn. The airplane became inverted and impacted the ground on its nose, bounced, and came to rest 150 feet north of the runway on its main landing gear facing south.

Examination of the airplane by the FAA inspector, who responded to the accident site, revealed that both wings were structurally damaged, and the engine was displaced into the firewall.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline transport; Commercial; Flight instructor	Age:	59, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Single-engine sea; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Center
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Glider	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane multi-engine; Airplane single-engine; Glider; Instrument airplane	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	April 29, 2002
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	February 28, 2002
Flight Time:	14500 hours (Total, all aircraft), 800 hours (Total, this make and model), 14200 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Aero Commander	Registration:	N7791V
Model/Series:	Callair A-9B	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Restricted (Special)	Serial Number:	1544
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	1
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Unknown	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3000 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	TIO-540
Registered Owner:	El Paso Soaring Society	Rated Power:	295 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:		Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:		Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 10000 ft AGL	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	5 knots / 10 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	38°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	El Paso, TX (T27)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	Unknown
Departure Time:	15:10 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	West Texas T27	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt;Dirt
Airport Elevation:	4007 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	8	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	7505 ft / 50 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Full stop

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	31.719722,-106.239166

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Wigington, Doug
Additional Participating Persons:	Patrick M MacQuarrie; FAA FSDO; Albuquerque, NM
Original Publish Date:	November 4, 2002
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	This accident report documents the factual circumstances of this accident as described to the NTSB.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=55213

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