



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Cumberland, Maryland	Accident Number:	IAD04LA020
Date & Time:	May 8, 2004, 11:30 Local	Registration:	N26644
Aircraft:	Taylorcraft BC	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot reported that while flying near his home, the airplane "experienced a downdraft and dropped 600 feet." The airplane "fell" into transmission lines, and became entangled, upside down, about 25 feet above the ground. A photograph of the scene revealed that the right wing was bent upward, about 90 degrees at the wing root, and another 90 degrees to the right, about 2 feet from the initial bend. The accident site was on a mountain slope. The nearest reporting airport, about 40 miles to the southeast, recorded winds of 7 knots about 30 minutes before the accident. An airport about 50 miles to the east recoded winds at 11, gusting to 16 knots about 20 minutes after the accident. An airport about 55 miles to the west recoded winds at 5 knots about 20 minutes after the accident. The fire chief who responded to the scene did not recall any winds.

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 adequate airspeed, which resulted in an inadvertent stall into transmission lines.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: CRUISE

Findings

1. (C) AIRSPEED - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. STALL - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

3. OBJECT - WIRE, TRANSMISSION

Factual Information

On May 8, 2004, about 1130 eastern daylight time, a Taylorcraft BC, N26644, was substantially damaged when it impacted power lines near Cumberland, Maryland. The certificated private pilot and the passenger were not injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and no flight plan had been filed for the flight, which departed Mexico Farms Airport (1W3), Cumberland, Maryland. The personal flight was conducted under 14 CFR Part 91.

According to a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) inspector, the pilot took off and was heading easterly, toward Irons Mountain, when the airplane became entangled in power lines.

In lieu of making a statement to the FAA inspector, the pilot handed him a newspaper article, which he characterized as his statement. According to the newspaper article, the pilot reported that, about 1,500 feet, "We hit a downdraft and the plane dropped 625 feet just like that. It just kept falling." The airplane "fell" toward two sets of transmission lines, and a landing gear caught on one of the wires. The airplane then came to rest upside down, suspended about 25 feet above the ground.

The pilot further reported, "We were close to home and my son came up almost immediately. He got some rope on one wing and tied the other end to his truck to stabilize the plane. The wind was blowing pretty hard."

A photograph of the airplane, hanging from a wire by one wheel, revealed that the right wing was bent about 90 degrees upward at the wing root, and another 90 degrees to the right, about 2 feet from the first bend.

The pilot and his passenger were suspended in the airplane until about 1345, when power company and rescue personnel removed them.

According to a written statement subsequently submitted by the pilot, the purpose of the flight was to take his grandson for a ride. Sometime after departure from Mexico Farms, while at an altitude of 1,600 feet (above mean sea level), the airplane encountered a downdraft and "dropped 600 feet to the high-tension wires," then "glided to a stop." The pilot also reported that he had flown the route many times and had never experienced a similar downdraft.

The pilot also stated that the airplane received its last annual inspection on January 17, 1998, that he last received a flight review on May 27, 2002, and that he had obtained his latest medical certificate (no class noted) on March 28, 2004.

According to FAA records, the pilot obtained his first and only third class medical certificate on February 28, 1986. When asked by the FAA inspector to provide records of his flight reviews,

the pilot could not provide any.

The weather reported at Winchester Regional Airport (OKV), Winchester, Virginia, about 40 nautical miles southeast, at 1100, included clear skies, and winds from 120 degrees true, at 7 knots. The weather reported at Hagerstown Regional Airport (HGR), Hagerstown, Maryland, about 50 miles to the east, at 1153, included clear skies, and winds from 150 degrees true, at 11, gusting to 16 knots. The weather reported at Morgantown Municipal Airport (MGW), Morgantown, West Virginia, about 55 miles to the west, at 1153, included clear skies, and winds from 140 degrees true, at 5 knots.

The fire chief who responded to the accident reported that he could not recall any wind blowing that day. He also stated that the ropes were used to stabilize the airplane so the occupants could be extricated.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	66, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Expired	Last FAA Medical Exam:	February 28, 1986
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	May 27, 2002
Flight Time:	2000 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1500 hours (Total, this make and model), 2 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Taylorcraft	Registration:	N26644
Model/Series:	BC	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	472508
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	January 17, 1998 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	
Time Since Last Inspection:	40 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	1180 Hrs as of last inspection	Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	A-65-8
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	65 Horsepower
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	OKV, 727 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	40 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	11:00 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	135°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	7 knots / None	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	120°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.35 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	17°C / 8°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Cumberland, MD (1W3)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:		Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	Mexico Farms Airport 1W3	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 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	39.604721,-78.760559

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Cox, Paul

Additional Participating Persons: Jerry Pratt; FAA/FSDO; Baltimore, MD

Original Publish Date: January 24, 2005

Last Revision Date:

Investigation Class: [Class](#)

Note:

Investigation Docket: <https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=59197>

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