



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Clayton, Louisiana	Accident Number:	FTW04LA201
Date & Time:	July 31, 2004, 08:50 Local	Registration:	N3159W
Aircraft:	Air Tractor AT-400	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 137: Agricultural		

Analysis

While maneuvering during an aerial application of chemicals on a field, the 5,972-hour pilot reported that the left wing collided with the lower set of transmission wires running perpendicular to the field being sprayed, about 60 feet off the ground. The pilot added that he had flown under the same set of wires six or seven times earlier that morning; however, during the last pass, he felt that "the aircraft ballooned and the tail came up." Subsequently, the airplane impacted terrain and came to rest upright.

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 high tension power lines.

Findings

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

Findings

1. LOW ALTITUDE FLIGHT/MANEUVER
 2. OBJECT - WIRE, TRANSMISSION
 3. (C) CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #2: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Occurrence #3: ON GROUND/WATER ENCOUNTER WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

4. TERRAIN CONDITION - CROP

5. TERRAIN CONDITION - GROUND

Factual Information

On July 31, 2004, at 0850 central daylight time, an Air Tractor AT-400 single-engine turbine powered agricultural airplane, N3159W, was destroyed, following an in-flight collision with power lines while maneuvering near Clayton, Louisiana. The commercial pilot, sole occupant of the airplane, sustained minor injuries. The airplane was registered to and operated by Goodman's Flying Service, Inc., of Chase, Louisiana. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and a flight plan was not filed for the 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 137 aerial application flight. The local flight originated from the operator's private airstrip near Chase, Louisiana, about 0840.

The operator reported to the NTSB investigator-in-charge that while the 5,972-hour pilot was on the second load of the day, while spraying a soy bean field on a south to north direction, the left wing collided with the lower set of transmission wires running perpendicular to the field being sprayed, about 60 feet off the ground. The pilot added that he had flown under the same set of wires six or seven times that morning; however, during the last pass, he felt that "the aircraft ballooned and the tail came up."

Following the collision with the wires, the pilot lost control of the airplane, the left wing dragged the ground, the nose dug-in, and the airplane came to rest in the inverted position where a post crash fire ensued.

Examination of the airplane by the operator revealed that the fuselage of the airplane broke in half during the accident sequence.

The closest weather reporting station to the accident site was the Adams County Airport (HEZ) near Natchez, Louisiana, located 17-nautical miles southeast of the accident site. At 0915, the Automated Weather Observing System at HEX reported wind calm, visibility 7 statute miles, clear sky, temperature 82 degrees Fahrenheit, dew point 77 degrees Fahrenheit, and an altimeter setting of 29.98 inches of Mercury.

A completed Pilot/Operator Aircraft Accident Report (NTSB Form 6120.1/2) was not received from the pilot or operator.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	23, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Center
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	January 31, 2003
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	5972 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Air Tractor	Registration:	N3159W
Model/Series:	AT-400	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Restricted (Special)	Serial Number:	400-0474
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	1
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Unknown	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	IO-520
Registered Owner:	Donald Goodman	Rated Power:	285 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	
Operator Does Business As:	Goodman's Flying Service Inc.	Operator Designator Code:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	HEZ,272 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	17 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	09:15 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	140°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	7 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	0 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	0°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.97 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	28°C / 25°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Chase, LA	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	08:40 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	31.7275,-91.582778

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Yeager, Leah
Additional Participating Persons:	Lilliard Bruce; Federal Aviation Administration; Baton Rouge, LA
Original Publish Date:	April 28, 2005
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=59787

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](#).