



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Big Timber, Montana	Accident Number:	SEA06CA095
Date & Time:	May 15, 2006, 20:00 Local	Registration:	N124WT
Aircraft:	Helmer Avid Magnum	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

At the beginning of his takeoff roll, the aircraft door popped open, so the pilot shut it. Then a few moments later, the door popped open again, and the pilot closed it a second time. While he was closing the door for the second time, the aircraft veered off the left side of the runway. At that point, the pilot saw that the aircraft was heading for a gate post and a fence, so he pulled the stick back in hopes of clearing the obstacles. But, the aircraft's left wing impacted the post, and the aircraft spun around about 200 degrees, and came to rest with its right wing entangled in the fence structure. After the accident, the pilot stated that his attempt to close the door had distracted him, and that he should have put 100 percent of his attention on the takeoff, and taken care of the door after he was airborne.

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 directional control after he diverted his attention to close the aircraft's door during the takeoff roll. Factors include a fence and fence post along the side of the runway.

Findings

Occurrence #1: ON GROUND/WATER COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - ROLL/RUN

Findings

1. (C) DIRECTIONAL CONTROL - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (C) DIVERTED ATTENTION - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) OBJECT - FENCE POST
4. (F) OBJECT - FENCE

Factual Information

On May 15, 2006, approximately 2000 mountain daylight time, an experimental Helmer Avid Magnum, N124WT, collided with a fence during a takeoff from a private airstrip near Big Timber, Montana. The private pilot, who was the sole occupant, was not injured, but the aircraft, which is owned and operated by the pilot, sustained substantial damage. The pilot was departing in visual meteorological conditions for a local personal flight.

According to the pilot, at the beginning of his takeoff roll, the aircraft door popped open, so he shut it. Then a few moments later, the door popped open again, and the pilot closed it a second time. While he was closing the door for the second time, the aircraft veered off the left side of the runway. At that point, the pilot saw that the aircraft was heading for a gate post and a fence, so he pulled the stick back in hopes of clearing the obstacles. But, the aircraft's left wing impacted the post, and the aircraft spun around about 200 degrees, and came to rest with its right wing entangled in the fence structure. After the accident, the pilot stated that his attempt to close the door had distracted him, and that he should have put 100 percent of his attention on the takeoff, and taken care of the door after he was airborne.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	60, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	
Instructor Rating(s):		Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3	Last FAA Medical Exam:	July 1, 2004
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	1941 hours (Total, all aircraft), 200 hours (Total, this make and model), 6 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Helmer	Registration:	N124WT
Model/Series:	Avid Magnum	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	Yes
Airworthiness Certificate:	Experimental (Special)	Serial Number:	124M
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	
Date/Type of Last Inspection:		Certified Max Gross Wt.:	
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	O-320-E2D
Registered Owner:	William B. Helmer	Rated Power:	
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Dusk
Observation Facility, Elevation:		Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:		Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:		Visibility	
Lowest Ceiling:		Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	Big Timber, MT	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:		Type of Airspace:	

Airport Information

Airport:	Private Airstrip NONE	Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:		IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	46.168609,-109.888336

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Anderson, Orrin

Additional Participating Persons:

Original Publish Date: August 29, 2006

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=63687>

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