



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

<b>Location:</b>	Castroville, Texas	<b>Accident Number:</b>	DFW07LA157
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	May 23, 2007, 13:00 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N65804
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Schweizer SGS 2-33A	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	2 None
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Glider tow		

## Analysis

The glider's flight instructor elected to abort the takeoff tow after he was unable to maintain directional control of the glider due to the excessive drag created by the tall grass on the left side of the runway. The flight instructor was unable to compensate for the dragging wing and released the tow rope. The glider sustained structural damage upon impact with a cornfield.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The flight instructor's inability to maintain directional control due to the drag created by the tall grass adjacent to the runway. A contributing factor was the tall grass.

## Findings

Occurrence #1: DRAGGED WING, ROTOR, POD, FLOAT OR TAIL/SKID  
Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - ROLL/RUN

### Findings

1. GLIDER LAUNCH/TOW EQUIPMENT - DISCONNECTED
2. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - HIGH VEGETATION
3. (C) DIRECTIONAL CONTROL - NOT POSSIBLE - PILOT IN COMMAND(CFI)

-----

Occurrence #2: ON GROUND/WATER ENCOUNTER WITH TERRAIN/WATER  
Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - ABORTED

Findings

4. TERRAIN CONDITION - CROP

## Factual Information

On May 23, 2007, approximately 1300 central daylight time, a Schweizer SGS 2-33A glider, N65804, sustained substantial damage when the left wing tip collided with high vegetation while being towed for takeoff from the Castroville Municipal Airport (T89), near Castroville Texas. The flight instructor and the student pilot receiving instruction were not injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 flight.

The student pilot, who was occupying the front seat, reported that the glider was resting on the left wing in tall grass before takeoff. During takeoff roll, the gliders' acceleration was affected by the drag inflicted on the left wing by the tall vegetation, causing the glider to veer to the left during takeoff. As the glider continued to veer towards the cornfield, the flight instructor released the glider from the tow rope causing the aircraft to impact a cornfield.

The flight instructor, who was in the back seat, reported that the left wing tip of the glider was dragged by high grass on the left side of the taxiway, causing the glider to steer to the left side. The flight instructor pilot elected to release the glider from the tow plane as the aircraft continued to veer into a cornfield.

A witness, who observed the mishap from the south taxiway, reported seeing the tow plane initiate the takeoff with the glider in tow. The witness added that he noticed that the left wing of the glider was dragging through the tall vegetation on the side of the runway. He then stated that the glider became airborne but was unable to overcome the inherent drag imposed by the tall vegetation. The glider then released the tow rope and veered left into the cornfield.

Local law enforcement officers, who were dispatched to the airport, reported that the glider was found with its tail facing the runway, laying approximately five feet into the cornfield at the south edge of the runway access road. There were no reported injuries and written statements were taken from the parties involved regarding the mishap.

A Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) inspector, who traveled to the scene, examined the wreckage. The inspector found that the tow-rope was disconnected on the glider side. A visual inspection of the glider revealed substantial damage to the fuselage frame due to the impact with the tall vegetation.

Despite several attempts by the investigator-in-charge, the pilot did not provide the Safety Board with a completed Pilot/Operator Aircraft Accident Report (NTSB Form 6120.1/2).

## Flight instructor Information

<b>Certificate:</b>		<b>Age:</b>	53,Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>		<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Rear
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	Glider	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>		<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	Yes
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>		<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	No
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 2 Unknown	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	May 1, 2007
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	Yes	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	
<b>Flight Time:</b>			

## Student pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>		<b>Age:</b>	26,Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>		<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Front
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>		<b>Restraint Used:</b>	
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>		<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	Yes
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>		<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	No
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Unknown Unknown	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	No	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	
<b>Flight Time:</b>			

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Schweizer	<b>Registration:</b>	N65804
<b>Model/Series:</b>	SGS 2-33A	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Glider
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Experimental (Special)	<b>Serial Number:</b>	327
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Tandem	<b>Seats:</b>	2
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>		<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>		<b>Engines:</b>	0
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>		<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	
<b>ELT:</b>	Not installed	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	Jean-Pierre Ducos	<b>Rated Power:</b>	
<b>Operator:</b>		<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	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:		Visibility	10 miles
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:	CASTROVILLE, TX (T89 )	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Castroville , TX	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	13:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	

## Airport Information

Airport:	Castroville Municipal Airport T89	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	Vegetation
Runway Used:	15	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	4600 ft / 75 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	None

## Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	2 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	29.339908,-98.869209(est)

## Administrative Information

**Investigator In Charge (IIC):** Casanova, Hector

**Additional Participating Persons:** Tom Drake; San Antonio, Texas

**Original Publish Date:** September 27, 2007

**Last Revision Date:**

**Investigation Class:** [Class](#)

**Note:**

**Investigation Docket:** <https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=66196>

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](#).