



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Ephrata, Washington	Accident Number:	SEA08CA122
Date & Time:	May 4, 2008, 14:22 Local	Registration:	N747JN
Aircraft:	Schempp-Hirth Nimbus-4M	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Loss of control in flight	Injuries:	1 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

This was the first flight after removal of the glider from storage and its reassembly. The pilot reported that during takeoff initial climb, the glider started to roll to the left despite his control inputs. He decided to abort the takeoff and land straight ahead while attempting to maintain control of the powered glider. Subsequently, the left wing struck the ground, and the glider began to cartwheel. Examination of the airframe revealed that the left and right wings were structurally damaged and the empennage was partially separated. Examination of the flight control system revealed that the left aileron connecting rod was disconnected at the fuselage/wing quick connection point and was undamaged. The pilot stated that during assembly of the glider prior to the flight, the left aileron control tube was inadvertently not attached, and that he did not verify that all flight controls moved free and correct prior to takeoff.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's inadequate preflight inspection and his failure to connect the left aileron control rod during assembly.

Findings

Aircraft	Aileron control system - Not inspected
Personnel issues	Preflight inspection - Pilot
Personnel issues	Aircraft control - Pilot

Factual Information

History of Flight

Initial climb	Loss of control in flight (Defining event)
Takeoff	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	69, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Center
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Glider	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3	Last FAA Medical Exam:	May 1, 2006
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	5000 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1500 hours (Total, this make and model), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Schempp-Hirth	Registration:	N747JN
Model/Series:	Nimbus-4M	Aircraft Category:	Glider
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Experimental (Special)	Serial Number:	14
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	1
Date/Type of Last Inspection:		Certified Max Gross Wt.:	
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	Solo
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	2625-02
Registered Owner:	Nelson Edward Funston	Rated Power:	
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KEPH, 1275 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	0 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	13:53 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	0°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	4 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.05 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	21°C / 3°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Ephrata, WA (KEPH)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	14:22 Local	Type of Airspace:	

Airport Information

Airport:	Ephrata Municipal Airport KEPH	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	21	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	3467 ft / 150 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	None

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:	47.308055,-119.51667

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Cawthra, Joshua
Additional Participating Persons:	Steve Dunn; Federal Aviation Administration; Spokane, WA
Original Publish Date:	June 30, 2008
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=67945

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