



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Tehachapi, California	Accident Number:	SEA08CA129
Date & Time:	May 10, 2008, 15:40 Local	Registration:	N361KS
Aircraft:	Schleicher ASK-21	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Miscellaneous/other	Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The glider was being towed to altitude by a tow airplane. During the takeoff initial climb, the spoiler handle was not locked and the spoilers momentarily extended twice and although the pilot felt that he had to input forward control forces, he did not visually check the position of the spoiler control handle. The tow pilot then gave a rudder wave signal to the pilot telling him to check the spoilers; however, because the spoilers appeared retracted when the pilot verified their position, the glider pilot misinterpreted the tow pilot and released the glider from the tow airplane at approximately 100 feet above ground level. The glider pilot force-landed the glider in a field. During the landing, the empennage broke from the remainder of the glider. The glider pilot did not report any mechanical malfunctions with the glider.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's inadequate preflight procedures and failure to check the spoiler control position, which resulted in the inadvertent deployment of the spoilers during takeoff. A contributing factor was the pilot's misinterpretation of the tow pilot's instructions.

Findings

Personnel issues	Preflight inspection - Pilot
Personnel issues	Incorrect action performance - Pilot
Personnel issues	Interpretation/understanding - Pilot

Factual Information

History of Flight

Initial climb	Miscellaneous/other (Defining event)
Landing	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	37, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Glider	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2	Last FAA Medical Exam:	October 1, 2007
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	2095 hours (Total, all aircraft), 6 hours (Total, this make and model)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Schleicher	Registration:	N361KS
Model/Series:	ASK-21	Aircraft Category:	Glider
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	21224
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	
Date/Type of Last Inspection:		Certified Max Gross Wt.:	
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	0
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	
Registered Owner:	Charles I H Cant	Rated Power:	
Operator:	Skylark North	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	WJF,2351 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	25 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	15:56 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	240°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	8 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	10°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.9 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	31°C / -4°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Tehachapi, CA (L94)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Tehachapi, CA (L94)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:		Type of Airspace:	

Airport Information

Airport:	Mountain Valley Airport L94	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	27R	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	4890 ft / 36 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Forced landing

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	
Total Injuries:	2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	35.101387,-118.427223

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Dunks, Kristi
Additional Participating Persons:	Steven Cline; Federal Aviation Administration; Van Nuys, CA
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=67978

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](#).