



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Roanoke, Texas	Accident Number:	DEN08LA096
Date & Time:	May 24, 2008, 16:30 Local	Registration:	N33384
Aircraft:	Commonwealth 185	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)	Injuries:	1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot, a diabetic on insulin, was in cruise flight when he felt ill due to low blood sugar. Though he was only two miles from his destination airport, he elected to land in a field. During the approach he was too high, and "could not get down in time." During the landing, he struck an embankment resulting in substantial damage to the airplane. An examination of the airplane systems revealed no anomalies. The pilot had not attempted to obtain a medical certificate after being diagnosed with diabetes in 2000, and had not accomplished a flight review since 2001. Low blood sugar (hypoglycemia), which is most commonly seen in diabetics on insulin, can lead to behavioral changes, confusion, fatigue, seizures, and loss of consciousness.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's physiologic impairment and failure to attain the proper touchdown point during an intentional off airport landing. Contributing to the accident was the pilot's improper in-flight planning.

Findings

Environmental issues	(general) - Not specified
Personnel issues	Decision making/judgment - Pilot
Personnel issues	Diet - Pilot
Aircraft	Descent/approach/glide path - Not attained/maintained

Factual Information

History of Flight

Landing-landing roll	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT) (Defining event)
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On May 24, 2008, approximately 1630 central daylight time, a Commonwealth 185, N33384, owned and operated by the pilot, was substantially damaged during a precautionary landing near Roanoke, Texas. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time of the accident. The personal flight was being conducted under the provisions of Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 without a flight plan. The pilot sustained minor injuries. The cross-country flight departed Rhome, Texas, approximately 1515 and was en route to Northwest Regional Airport (52F), Roanoke, Texas.

According to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) inspector who traveled to the scene, the pilot was in cruise flight when he started feeling "shaky" and felt his blood sugar was low. According to the Pilot Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot, he had started flying around 1400, had stopped in Rhome to visit a friend, and was on his way back to Roanoke. He had the airport in sight when he "started feeling sick." The pilot indicated that he performed a precautionary landing to a field two miles southwest of the airport. During the approach he was too high, and "could not get down in time." During the landing, he struck an embankment and the main landing gear and nose gear were damaged. Further examination revealed that the firewall was wrinkled, the gear attach points had separated, and the engine mounts were bent. An examination of the airplane systems, conducted by the FAA, revealed no anomalies.

The pilot was treated after the accident and his blood sugar was measured but he did not recall what that reading was. He was given something to eat and felt better. Following the accident, the pilot reported to the FAA and the Safety Board Investigator-in-Charge, that he had type II diabetes. The pilot noted that the condition had been diagnosed in 2000 and was controlled through the use of insulin. He stated that he had occasional problems with low blood sugar. He had been considering ending his time as a pilot but "did not do it soon enough."

The pilot reported that his last medical certificate was issued in May of 1999 and his last flight review was conducted in April of 2001. He stated that he did not apply for a medical certificate after 1999 and had never been denied a medical certificate. He was aware that he could have been awarded a medical certificate, despite his medical conditions, with various limitations and operating requirements. He did hold a current driver's license at the time of the accident and believed he was operating under the requirements of a Sport Pilot Certificate. He did acknowledge that his airplane did not meet the requirements for Sport Pilot Operations, as it exceeded the requirement for gross weight.

According to Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 61.23 the pilot was required to hold at least a third class airmen medical certificate while "exercising the privileges of a private pilot certificate." According to Part 61.56 the pilot was required to have satisfied the requirements of a flight review within 24 calendar months of his last flight review while acting as pilot in command of an airplane.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	72, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	None	Last FAA Medical Exam:	May 1, 1999
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	April 1, 2001
Flight Time:	2670 hours (Total, all aircraft), 2150 hours (Total, this make and model), 2650 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 18 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 7 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Commonwealth	Registration:	N33384
Model/Series:	185	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	1605
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	August 1, 2007 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1450 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	4050 Hrs as of last inspection	Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	C85-12E
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	85 Horsepower
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KAFW	Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:	16:53 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 4900 ft AGL	Visibility	7 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	13 knots / 22 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	160°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.84 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	33°C / 21°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Rhome, TX (7TS0)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Roanoke, TX (52F)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	15:15 Local	Type of Airspace:	

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	33.04972,-97.232223

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Kaiser, Jennifer
Additional Participating Persons:	Dale Johnson; FAA Flight Standards District Office; Fort Worth, TX
Original Publish Date:	September 26, 2008
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=68137

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](#).