



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

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<b>Location:</b>	Franklin, Maine	<b>Accident Number:</b>	MIA08LA161
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	August 5, 2008, 19:25 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	UNREG
<b>Aircraft:</b>	GT Ultralights Airborne Edge X	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)	<b>Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal, 1 Serious
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

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## Analysis

Witnesses observed the non-certificated pilot with a passenger on board the unregistered, experimental light sport aircraft. The pilot of the weight-shift trike was performing a low-level maneuver above the bay when the trike made contact with the water and crashed. One witness, a friend of the pilot, reported that the pilot commonly performed the low-level maneuver as a greeting to the local residents in the area. Examination of the wreckage did not reveal any evidence of a preimpact failure or malfunction with the trike and its systems. The postmortem toxicology testing revealed the pilot had a blood alcohol level of 159 mg/dl (0.159%). The pilot would have been substantially impaired and may have been alcohol dependent given his apparent tolerance to the sedative effects of alcohol.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's improper decision to perform low-altitude maneuvers and his failure to maintain clearance from the surface of the bay. Contributing to the accident was the pilot's impairment due to alcohol.

## Findings

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<b>Personnel issues</b>	Decision making/judgment - Pilot
<b>Personnel issues</b>	Aircraft control - Pilot
<b>Personnel issues</b>	Alcohol - Pilot

## Factual Information

### History of Flight

<b>Maneuvering-low-alt flying</b>	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT) (Defining event)
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#### HISTORY

On August 5, 2008, about 1925 eastern daylight time, an unregistered, experimental light sport aircraft (E-LSA), GT Ultralight, Airborne Edge X Trike, incurred substantial damage when it crashed into the waters of the Taunton Bay near Franklin, Maine. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and no flight plan was filed. The weight-shift trike was owned and operated by the pilot, under the provisions of Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 as a local personal flight. The pilot was killed and the passenger received serious injuries. The flight originated from a private airstrip earlier that day, at an unspecified time.

A friend of the pilot, and witness to the accident, stated to a Maine State Police representative that the trike was observed flying over the bay, which was not uncommon. The pilot completed a circle, at the same time, the trike dipped toward the surface of the bay. The witness added that the maneuver was how the pilot would say "Hi" to the locals in the area. While performing the maneuver, a part of the trike made contact with the water and crashed. The witness added that the pilot often performed the same maneuver, which included banking low above the surface of the water.

Witnesses rushed to the submerged trike and managed to rescue the trapped passenger and the pilot from the underwater wreckage; they both were in their seats with their respective seat belts attached.

#### PERSONNEL INFORMATION

The pilot, age 52, did not hold a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) pilot license or a medical certificate. The pilot's flight logbook was not provided.

#### AIRCRAFT INFORMATION

The GT Ultralight, Airborne Edge X Trike was a two-place, weight-shifting controlled trike, powered by a Rotax 580, 65-horsepower engine. The trike was built to meet Australian Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) regulations, CAA 95.32. The trike's maintenance records were not provided.

#### METEOROLOGICAL INFORMATION

The nearest official weather reporting station was Bangor International Airport (BGR), Bangor, Maine, located 32 miles southeast of the accident site. The 1953 surface observation was: winds 60 degrees at 4 knots; visibility 10 statute miles; sky condition few at 4,500; temperature 20 degrees Celsius; dew point 12 degrees Celsius; altimeter 29.99 inches of mercury.

## WRECKAGE AND IMPACT INFORMATION

An examination of the wreckage was conducted by an FAA inspector. There was no evidence of a preimpact failure or malfunction with the trike and its systems.

## MEDICAL AND PATHOLOGICAL INFORMATION

A postmortem examination of the pilot was conducted under the authority of the Maine State Medical Examiner, Augusta, Maine, on August 7, 2008. The cause of death for the pilot was attributed to multiple blunt force injuries.

The FAA Civil Aeromedical Institute (CAMI) conducted toxicology testing on specimens from the pilot. No carbon monoxide, cyanide, or drugs were detected; however, review of the report revealed:

"159 (mg/dL, mg/hg) ETHANOL detected in Blood  
 159 (mg/dL, mg/hg) ETHANOL detected in Vitreous  
 174 (mg/dL, mg/hg) ETHANOL detected in Urine  
 129 (mg/dL, mg/hg) ETHANOL detected in Muscle"

### Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	None	<b>Age:</b>	52, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Front
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	Yes
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	None	<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>	GT Ultralights	<b>Registration:</b>	UNREG
<b>Model/Series:</b>	Airborne Edge X	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Weight-shift
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Unknown	<b>Serial Number:</b>	582-373
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Tricycle	<b>Seats:</b>	2
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	Unknown	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	551 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>		<b>Engines:</b>	1 Reciprocating
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>		<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Rotax
<b>ELT:</b>	Not installed	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	On file	<b>Rated Power:</b>	65 Horsepower
<b>Operator:</b>	On file	<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual (VMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	BGR,191 ft msl	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	32 Nautical Miles
<b>Observation Time:</b>	19:53 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	114°
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Few / 4500 ft AGL	<b>Visibility</b>	10 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	Broken / 6500 ft AGL	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	4 knots /	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Wind Direction:</b>	60°	<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	29.98 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	20°C / 12°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	Franklin, ME (None)	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	None
<b>Destination:</b>	Franklin, ME (None)	<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>		<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>	1 Serious	<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal, 1 Serious	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	44.578334,-68.216667(est)

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Obregon, Jose
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	Joe Ingalls; FAA/FSDO; Portland, ME
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	April 22, 2010
<b>Last Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Investigation Class:</b>	<a href="#">Class</a>
<b>Note:</b>	
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	<a href="https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=68622">https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=68622</a>

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](#).