



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Circle, Montana	Accident Number:	WPR11CA286
Date & Time:	June 24, 2011, 08:05 Local	Registration:	N2362D
Aircraft:	Air Tractor AT301	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Loss of control in flight	Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 137: Agricultural		

Analysis

The pilot stated that he loaded the hopper of the airplane with chemicals for an agricultural flight and proceeded to take off. During the initial climb, at approximately 50 feet above ground level (agl), the pilot noticed a tailwind from the southwest and at 60 feet agl noticed that his climb rate had diminished. He performed a forced landing in the wash across a main road, and on touchdown the main landing gear separated and the airplane proceeded inside a gully where the wings sustained substantial damage. At the time of the accident, the density altitude was approximately 3,600 feet. The pilot reported no mechanical issues or malfunctions that would have precluded normal operation and he felt that he was unable to attain an adequate flying speed due to the high humidity.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's failure to attain and maintain an adequate airspeed during initial climb.

Findings

Aircraft	Airspeed - Not attained/maintained
Personnel issues	Aircraft control - Pilot

Factual Information

History of Flight

Initial climb	Loss of control in flight (Defining event)
Landing	Off-field or emergency landing
Landing-flare/touchdown	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial; Private	Age:	68, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Single
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	February 18, 2011
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	April 6, 2010
Flight Time:	6716 hours (Total, all aircraft), 2917 hours (Total, this make and model), 6716 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 145 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 120 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 3 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Air Tractor	Registration:	N2362D
Model/Series:	AT301 NO SERIES	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Restricted (Special)	Serial Number:	301-0404
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	1
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	December 13, 2010 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	7798 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	145 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	7379 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Pratt & Whitney
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	R1340
Registered Owner:	Harris Spraying Inc.	Rated Power:	600 Horsepower
Operator:	Harris Spraying Inc.	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KOLF,1900 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	41 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	07:53 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	360°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 900 ft AGL	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	6 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	250°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.77 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	17°C / 16°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Circle Airport, MT (4U6)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Circle Airport, MT (4U6)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	08:03 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	Circle Town Airport 4U6	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	2422 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	30	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	4100 ft / 75 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	47.422222,-105.566947(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Rich, Jefferey
Additional Participating Persons:	Rick Koffman; FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION; Helena, MT
Original Publish Date:	October 4, 2011
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=80884

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](#).