



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Waller, Texas	Accident Number:	GAA18CA382
Date & Time:	June 23, 2018, 13:45 Local	Registration:	N123PW
Aircraft:	PZL-SWIDNIK PW 5	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Collision during takeoff/land	Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

According to the glider pilot, about 15 minutes into the flight, the glider had reached 2,000 ft above ground level (agl), but he was unable to find more lift. The glider was about 1.5 miles west of the airfield, and he decided to continue west in search of lift under a cloud formation. He did not find lift and returned to his previous position 1.5 miles west of the airfield at 1,200 ft agl. The pilot decided to land off the airfield.

The pilot entered the pattern using the glider's spoilers and turned from the downwind leg to the base leg at 700 ft agl. He reported that he allowed the glider's flightpath to take him .5 mile too far downwind. During the base leg of the pattern, he reported that he had to "crab the airplane into the wind" to avoid being pushed further downwind. On final, the glider descended rapidly and collided with trees.

The glider sustained substantial damage to the left wing spar.

The pilot reported that the wind at the time of the accident was from 190° at 15 knots. He attempted to land on a heading of 170°.

The pilot reported that there were no mechanical malfunctions or failures with the glider that would have precluded normal operation.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

The glider pilot's failure to maintain clearance from trees during landing.

Findings

Aircraft	Descent/approach/glide path - Not attained/maintained
Environmental issues	Tree(s) - Effect on operation
Aircraft	Altitude - Not attained/maintained
Environmental issues	(general) - Effect on operation

Factual Information

History of Flight

Enroute	Loss of lift
Approach	Other weather encounter
Landing	Collision during takeoff/land (Defining event)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	59, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Single
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Glider	Restraint Used:	4-point
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	None	Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	January 18, 2018
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 210 hours (Total, all aircraft), 151 hours (Total, this make and model), 168 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 12 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 8 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	PZL-SWIDNIK	Registration:	N123PW
Model/Series:	PW 5 NO SERIES	Aircraft Category:	Glider
Year of Manufacture:	1996	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Experimental (Special)	Serial Number:	1705024
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - ; Ski/wheel	Seats:	1
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	July 5, 2017 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	661 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	0
Airframe Total Time:	299 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	
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:	K11R,308 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	21 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	18:55 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	274°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 5000 ft AGL	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:		Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	8 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	None / None
Wind Direction:	170°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	29.86 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	34°C / 23°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Waller, TX (89TA)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Waller, TX (89TA)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	13:25 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	Soaring Club Of Houston 89TA	Runway Surface Type:	Grass/turf
Airport Elevation:	308 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:		IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	Full stop;Traffic pattern

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:	30.192777,-95.963333(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Hicks, Michael
Additional Participating Persons:	Mark Hopp; FAA; Houston, TX
Original Publish Date:	March 18, 2019
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=97618

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](#).