



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Nicolaus, California	Accident Number:	GAA18CA309
Date & Time:	May 19, 2018, 09:45 Local	Registration:	N5128N
Aircraft:	AIR TRACTOR INC AT 402	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Low altitude operation/event	Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 137: Agricultural		

Analysis

The pilot reported that, during an agricultural application flight, he observed a power transmission wire with no obstructions underneath. He added that he turned around to enter the spray field under the wire, where he observed one wire sagging lower than the other wires. While flying under the power transmission wire, the airplane encountered turbulence, so he decided to lower the nose to prevent being pushed into the wire. However, the tail rose up and struck the power transmission wire.

The airplane sustained substantial damage to the vertical stabilizer and rudder.

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

The pilot reported that the wind was calm.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

The pilot's failure to maintain adequate clearance from a power transmission wire.

Findings

Aircraft	Pitch control - Incorrect use/operation
Personnel issues	Monitoring environment - Pilot
Environmental issues	Wire - Effect on operation

Factual Information

History of Flight

Maneuvering-low-alt flying	Attempted remediation/recovery
Maneuvering-low-alt flying	Low altitude operation/event (Defining event)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	69
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Single
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	4-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	December 21, 2017
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	December 27, 2017
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 33252 hours (Total, all aircraft), 631 hours (Total, this make and model), 136 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 105 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 7 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	AIR TRACTOR INC	Registration:	N5128N
Model/Series:	AT 402 A	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1998	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Restricted (Special)	Serial Number:	402A-1054
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	1
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	December 1, 2017 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	7000 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Turbo prop
Airframe Total Time:	5133 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	P&W Canada
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	PT6-11AG
Registered Owner:		Rated Power:	550 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	Agricultural aircraft (137)

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KLHM, 122 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	7 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	16:35 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	102°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	10 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	None / None
Wind Direction:	150°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	29.9 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	17°C / 10°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Knights Landing, CA (PVT)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	09:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

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:	38.932777,-121.496665(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Benhoff, Kathryn
Additional Participating Persons:	Brian L Allen; FAA; Sacramento, CA
Original Publish Date:	October 24, 2018
Note:	This accident report documents the factual circumstances of this accident as described to the NTSB.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=97348

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The Independent Safety Board Act, as codified at 49 U.S.C. Section 1154(b), precludes the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an incident or accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report. A factual report that may be admissible under 49 U.S.C. § 1154(b) is available [here](#).