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Australian Transport Safety Bureau
PO Box 967, Civic Square ACT 2608
Australia
1800 020 616
+61 2 6257 4150 from overseas

www.atsb.gov.au

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ATSB TRANSPORT SAFETY REPORT
Aviation Occurrence Investigation A0-2009-051
Preliminary

Collision with terrain

81 km NE Winton, Qld

17 August 2009

Abstract

At about 1730 Eastern Standard Time on 17 August 2009, a Cessna Company U206G aircraft, registered VH-KVT, was being operated on a local flight on a property 81 km north-east of Winton, Qld. The pilot was the only person on board. Following a steep dive, the aircraft collided with flat, open terrain in a steep nose-low attitude, resulting in serious damage. The pilot received fatal injuries.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

At about 1730 Eastern Standard Time¹ on 17 August 2009, a Cessna Company U206G aircraft, registered VH-KVT, was being operated on a local flight on a property 81 km north-east of Winton, Qld. The pilot was the only person on board.

The purpose of the flight was to inspect livestock watering facilities on the property. The task involved flying past the facilities at 500 to 700 ft above ground level to visually confirm the presence of water in those facilities. Reportedly, the flight normally took about 25 minutes.

There were no witnesses to the aircraft's takeoff. However, at about 1730, a witness who was positioned about 5 km south-south-west of the departure airstrip observed the aircraft about 2

km to the east, flying in a north-westerly direction at what was estimated to have been the normal altitude for the type of operation. The witness also spoke to the pilot by radio. There was no indication that the flight was proceeding in other than a normal manner. A short time later, when the aircraft was about 2 km north of the witness's position, the witness saw the aircraft in a steep dive but lost sight of it behind slightly rising ground. The witness located the aircraft wreckage adjacent to a road leading to the property homestead.

Injuries to persons

The pilot received fatal injuries from the impact.

Pilot information

The pilot had a total of about 500 hrs flying experience at the time of the occurrence. He was familiar with the aircraft and with the task, having conducted it many times previously.

Weather conditions

The weather conditions around the time of the occurrence were reported to have been fine and clear, with a light wind and a temperature of about 30° C.

1 The 24-hour clock is used in this report to describe the local time of day, Eastern Standard Time (EST), as particular events occurred. Eastern Standard Time was Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) + 10 hours.

Wreckage and impact information

The aircraft was seriously damaged² by impact forces (Figure 1). The right wingtip struck the ground first, followed by the propeller and engine; indicating that the aircraft was in a nose-low, right wing-low attitude at impact. There was no fire. There was fuel staining on the bottom surface of the right wing and a strong smell of fuel in the area.

Figure 1: Accident site



Damage to the propeller indicated that the engine was delivering significant power at the time of impact.

The impact was not survivable.

Ongoing investigation activities

The investigation is continuing and will include examination of the:

- aircraft's maintenance history
- aircraft's fuel status and the in-flight management of that fuel
- pilot's background and experience
- possible factors that might have affected the pilot's control of the aircraft.

² The Australian Transport Safety Regulations 2003 definition of 'serious damage' includes the destruction of the transport vehicle.