

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
199603229**

**Cessna Aircraft Company
Agwagon**

09 October 1996

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NOTE: All air safety occurrences reported to the ATSB are categorised and recorded. For a detailed explanation on Category definitions please refer to the ATSB website at www.atsb.gov.au.

Occurrence Number: 199603229 **Occurrence Type:** Accident
Location: 20km SE Morawa
State: WA **Inv Category:** 4
Date: Wednesday 09 October 1996
Time: 1600 hours **Time Zone** WST
Highest Injury Level: Fatal
Injuries:

	Fatal	Serious	Minor	None	Total
Crew	1	0	0	0	1
Ground	0	0	0	0	0
Passenger	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1	0	0	0	1

Aircraft Manufacturer: Cessna Aircraft Company
Aircraft Model: A188B/A1
Aircraft Registration: VH-HQQ **Serial Number:** 18801381
Type of Operation: Commercial Aerial Agriculture - Other
Damage to Aircraft: Destroyed
Departure Point: Perenjoi WA
Departure Time: 1530 WST
Destination: Perenjoi WA

Crew Details:

Role	Class of Licence	Hours on	
		Type	Hours Total
Pilot-In-Command	Commercial	150.0	3100

Approved for Release: Thursday, February 6, 1997

The task was to spray a paddock which contained two sets of wires. The pilot was aware of the wires and planned to fly under the high tension wires mounted on pylons, and over the smaller dual set of supply wires. On about the sixth spraying run, and after successfully flying under the high tension wires, the aircraft was seen to level off in the pull-up manoeuvre and attempt to fly under the second set of wires. The aircraft contacted the wires and descended into the ground. It then bounced up in a fireball and impacted the ground a second time.

When observers arrived at the scene, the aircraft was burning fiercely and rescue of the pilot was not possible.

The pilot was given a briefing and a map of the area to be sprayed. Both of these included information about the two sets of wires on the property. The pilot told the aircraft owner that he planned to fly under the first set of pylon wires and over the second set of smaller, lower wires. He was seen to orbit the paddock a number of times after arriving in the area and before commencing his first swath run. The pilot operated according to his stated plan for about six runs before he struck the wire.

The pilot was reported to have a safety orientated work ethos and demonstrated a professional approach to his work. His chief pilot had observed him on several occasions when he would have been unaware that he was being watched and, on these occasions, he did not demonstrate any unsafe tendencies.

Studies have been conducted over the years aimed at identifying deficiencies in agricultural operations, in particular, those associated with wire strikes. It is generally accepted within the aviation industry that wires present a constant hazard to agricultural flight operations and, in this case, the pilot took appropriate actions to minimise the danger to his task. It was not determined why the pilot did not fly over the second set of wires, after successfully clearing them on about six previous occasions. The tolerances in an under and over operation, such as this, are narrow, and small distractions to the pilot's focus on the wires could result in a miscalculation.

No evidence of aircraft or engine malfunction was found in the investigation, nor was any predisposing medical condition identified. The pilot showed no signs of fatigue and his demonstrated skills were suitable for the task allocated.
