

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
198601445**

Piper PA 25-235/A1

28 November 1986

Readers are advised that the Australian Transport Safety Bureau investigates for the sole purpose of enhancing transport safety. Consequently, Bureau reports are confined to matters of safety significance and may be misleading if used for any other purposes.

Investigations commenced on or before 30 June 2003, including the publication of reports as a result of those investigations, are authorised by the CEO of the Bureau in accordance with Part 2A of the Air Navigation Act 1920.

Investigations commenced after 1 July 2003, including the publication of reports as a result of those investigations, are authorised by the CEO of the Bureau in accordance with the Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003 (TSI Act). Reports released under the TSI Act are not admissible as evidence in any civil or criminal proceedings.

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.

This accident was not subject to an on scene investigation.

Occurrence Number: 198601445 **Occurrence Type:** Accident
Location: Rupanyup (17 km ENE Horsham) VIC
Date: 28 November 1986 **Time:** 1040
Highest Injury Level: Nil
Injuries:

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

Aircraft Details: Piper PA 25-235/A1
Registration: VH-FAN
Serial Number:
Operation Type: Aerial Work (Agricultural Spraying)
Damage Level: Substantial
Departure Point: Rupanyup VIC
Departure Time: 1040
Destination: Rupanyup VIC

Approved for Release: May 12th 1987

Circumstances:

Spraying runs were being conducted over a paddock which had power lines along one boundary. The pilot had been passing beneath the lines during each run, however after completing about two thirds of the task the wire deflector on the aircraft snagged and broke the powerline. The pilot carried out a precautionary landing and discovered that the rudder of the aircraft had been substantially damaged by the wire strike. At the point where the wire strike occurred there was less clearance between the wires and the ground than that available during previous swath runs. The pilot was aware of the situation, but had been subject to a visual illusion, which had led him to believe that there was sufficient clearance to allow the aircraft to pass beneath the wires. By the time he realised that the clearance was insufficient he was unable to take avoiding action, and had elected to allow the wire to strike the deflector, rather than risk the landing gear contacting the ground. The anti-snag deflector plate on top of the rudder had failed, allowing the wire to contact the rudder. The upper portion of this component had then been torn from the aircraft.