

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
198602342**

Cessna 188

29 July 1986

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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: 198602342 **Occurrence Type:** Accident
Location: "Bertangles" (8 km East Hay) NSW
Date: 29 July 1986 **Time:** 1535 approx
Highest Injury Level: Serious
Injuries:

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

Aircraft Details: Cessna 188
Registration: VH-MXN
Serial Number:
Operation Type: Aerial Work (Agricultural Spraying)
Damage Level: Destroyed
Departure Point: Hay NSW
Departure Time: 1535 approx
Destination: Hay NSW

Approved for Release: January 28th 1987

Circumstances:

Before he commenced spraying operations in the particular paddock, the pilot had been reminded of the presence of power lines in the area. There was also a group of trees in the paddock, and the pilot sprayed the clear area first, passing over the power lines on at least two occasions. He then advised the property owner by radio that he would spray in the vicinity of the trees "freehand", before resuming normal spraying runs. On the first pass near the trees, the aircraft struck the power lines. The cockpit to fin cable deflector failed and one power line struck the fin about 50 centimetres from the top. The resulting loads caused the rear fuselage to fail, and the entire empennage separated from the aircraft, which dived to the ground and came to rest inverted. The pilot was able to recall that he had the power lines in sight as he lowered the nose to pass under them. It was likely that he misjudged the height of the tail of the aircraft relative to the cockpit with the aircraft in a descending attitude. The injuries suffered by the pilot were made more severe by virtue of the fact that he was not wearing a helmet, and because the seat belt buckle had failed. It was determined that the seat belts fitted to the aircraft were not of a type approved for agricultural operations, but it was not established when or why these particular belts had been installed.