

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
198903742**

Cessna A188B-A1

13 January 1989

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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: 198903742 **Occurrence Type:** Accident
Location: 1 km WSW of Ayr Aerodrome QLD
Date: 13 January 1989 **Time:** 1931
Highest Injury Level: Minor
Injuries:

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

Aircraft Details: Cessna A188B-A1
Registration: VH-UDG
Serial Number: 188-03281
Operation Type: Aerial Work
Damage Level: Substantial
Departure Point: Mona Park QLD
Departure Time: 1920 Approx.
Destination: Ayr Aerodrome QLD

Approved for Release: March 16th 1989

Circumstances:

The pilot departed the treatment area as darkness fell, to fly the 15 kilometres to Ayr aerodrome. His loader/driver had left the agricultural strip earlier after the last load of urea fertilizer had been loaded into the hopper of the aircraft. He had directions from the pilot to deploy kerosene lights on one side of runway 11 at Ayr for a night landing. Immediately before the accident, the aircraft was seen to orbit a farmhouse three kilometres north-west of the threshold of runway 11. It was flying low with the spray lights ON, in a very intense thunderstorm. Heavy rain was falling at the time. The farmer saw the aircraft lights disappear to the south and at the same time the electricity supply was cut. Convinced that the aircraft had crashed, he drove to the area where he had seen it disappear. When he arrived at a crossroads, he saw downed powerlines and the pilot, whom he recognised, standing among them. The pilot was in shock and incoherent. The aircraft had struck 11,000 Volt powerlines at a major junction of the electricity grid. It had cartwheeled and came to rest, upright, in tall sugar cane, 100 metres from the intersection. The pilot holds a Class Four and a Five Instrument Rating which entitle him to fly at night in Visual Meteorological Conditions (VMC). However, the aircraft was certified for Visual Flight Rules (VFR) only. Weather at destination was such that VMC was not met and flight by visual reference was not possible. The pilot had decided to return to Ayr so that spray gear could be fitted to the aircraft in preparation for work on the following day.

Significant Factors:

The following factors were considered relevant to the development of the accident

1. Inadequate preflight preparation in that the pilot incorrectly assessed the weather conditions.
2. The pilot did not follow approved night VFR procedures.

3. Flight was continued into adverse weather conditions.
4. The pilot experienced spatial disorientation while flying at low level.
5. The pilot did not see the powerlines in time to avoid a collision.
6. It was expedient to return the aircraft to home base for fitment of spray gear.