

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
199400222**

**Centrum Naukowo-Produkcyjne-PZL
Dromader**

31 January 1994

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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.

The Bureau did not conduct an on scene investigation of this occurrence. The information presented below was obtained from information supplied to the Bureau.

Occurrence Number: 199400222 **Occurrence Type:** Accident
Location: Snowy Range
State: VIC **Inv Category:** 4
Date: Monday 31 January 1994
Time: 1045 hours **Time Zone** ESuT
Highest Injury Level: None

Aircraft Manufacturer: Centrum Naukowo-Produkcyjne-PZL
Aircraft Model: M-18
Aircraft Registration: VH-DRO **Serial Number:** 1Z019-09
Type of Operation: Commercial Fire Control - Other
Damage to Aircraft: Substantial
Departure Point: Snowy Range, VIC
Departure Time: 1045 ESuT
Destination: Snowy Range, VIC

Crew Details:

Role	Class of Licence	Hours on	
		Type	Hours Total
Pilot-In-Command	Commercial	90.0	22000

Approved for Release: Monday, March 28, 1994

A number of agricultural aircraft were operating on fire suppression work from Snowy Range airfield which is situated in the Victorian Alps at an elevation of 5300 feet. The airfield has two grass strips. The north/south strip is 900 metres long and the east/west strip is 550 metres long. VH-DRO was based at Wangaratta and its pilot had never been to Snowy Range airfield. Because of this, when he arrived at the airfield he made a touch and go landing on each strip prior to making a full stop landing. The pilot said the wind was a 12 knot westerly. The crosswind limit for the aircraft is 15 knots.

After taking on a load of fire retardent chemical, the pilot taxied for takeoff into the west using the short strip. The aircraft became airborne a short distance before the end of the strip and the pilot estimated it got to a height of about 10 feet. It then sank back towards the strip, clipped a fence at the end of the strip and shortly afterwards hit a dirt mound. The pilot said he realised then that the aircraft was not going to fly so he closed the throttle and let the aircraft slide to a stop over the rough ground.

The landing gear was torn out and the aircraft sustained substantial damage in the ground slide. After the pilot evacuated the aircraft, he noted the wind had dropped to completely calm conditions. This was verified by ground crew at the scene. Aircraft performance data indicated that under the conditions prevailing at the time of the attempted takeoff, the aircraft would take about a 450 metre ground roll before becoming airborne which is approximately the distance taken on this occasion. The takeoff distance required to a height of 50 feet was about 870 metres .

The pilot said that when the aircraft started to sink he tried to dump the load but his attempt was not successful.

