



NTSB MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

Adam Gerhardt
Air Safety Investigator
General Aviation Accident Investigation Division, AS-20

Date: 9/1/2017
Person Contacted: Jonathan F. Wanda (Pilot in Command)
NTSB Accident Number: GAA17CA491

Narrative:

The following is a memorandum of record of an email statement from the pilot in command to the Federal Aviation Administration Aviation Safety Inspector assigned to the accident:

“On Monday, Aug. 14th at approximately 13:15 I left my loading zone from a field 2 miles north of Westby, WI. WX was clear with light wind out of the east. The field I was to spray is on the northwest side of town just south of Rt. 14. I approached the small field from the north and did a high recon, taking note of the trees lining the north & east borders, the houses on the east, south & west side, the highway on the north side and the power lines running parallel to the highway. I circled once again slowly descending to about maybe 100-150 ft agl looking closely for any hazards and especially at sensitive areas like the houses to make sure no people, animals or gardens would be a factor. After assessment I decided to enter the field for my first pass from the west along the northern tree-lined border. I dropped in and started spraying going along at about 70mph. As I approached the end of the field I suddenly became aware of two large power lines stretched out in front of me at eye level and closing fast. I instinctively pulled up on the collective and back on the cyclic managing to clear the wires with the fuselage. I thought I had missed them but a second later I felt a violent lurch, heard at least one thump and was jolted sideways. I immediately identified a grass clearing and attempted to auto rotate down towards it. About that same time I noticed my tail stabilizer fin sail past my windscreen and realized things were about to go from bad to worse. I immediately started to spin out of control and all I could do was keep trying to somehow keep the aircraft level with the horizon so as not to roll it. An instant before impact I realized I was leaning forward in my seat over the controls so I then leaned back and braced for impact hoping for the best. After the dust settled, I made a positive self assessment that I was in fact uninjured and I exited the aircraft without problem. I then realized the engine was still running and quickly pulled the fuel mixture, turned off the battery and closed the fuel shutoff valve stepping away from the aircraft.”