



RECORD OF PHONE CONVERSATION

Eric M. Gutierrez
Air Safety Investigator
Western Pacific Region

Date: September 22, 2020
Person Contacted: Robert R. Armstrong (Pilot)
NTSB Accident Number: WPR20CA313

Narrative:

The following is a synopsis of the information provided by Robert R. Armstrong in a telephone conversation.

On September 19, 2020 he had flown N45027, an Air Tractor, AT 402 from (3KS9) Tri Rotor Airport in Ulysses, Kansas to Tri-Rotor Ag Services Airport in Somerton, Arizona. Upon landing he made contact with Mr. Matt Fieldgrove (General Manager of the Arizona Tri-Rotor Ag Services branch) and discussed the chemicals that had previously been used. They had decided it was best to clean and neutralize any chemicals that may still be in the airplanes hopper and directed a ground person to fill the hopper with water and clean the tank. Later that evening while talking with Mr. Fieldgrove, they discussed his night currency and decided to have him fly a couple of laps in the pattern to start getting him accustom to night flying. Later, that evening as it was getting dark, he again met with Mr. Fieldgrove, conducted a preflight inspection of the airplane and discussed the different functions of the airplane's lights. He then added fuel to the airplane and prepared to take off for a local night flight. He taxied the airplane onto the 2500 foot, dirt runway in preparation for takeoff and did a gradual application the power control lever to about 55 gal per hour (about $\frac{3}{4}$ of power), but not to full power for takeoff. Just beyond the half-way point on the runway, he noticed the airplane was not obtaining the speed needed to takeoff and applied full power. Near the end of the runway, the airplane was not obtaining the speed needed for take, he aborted the takeoff and pulled the power. The airplane exited the runway and impacted vegetation, he then exited the airplane. A post-crash fire ensued, destroying the airplane.

Mr. Armstrong added that, after the accident he discussed the events with Mr. Fieldgrove and determined the airplane was filled with water to clean the hopper

tanks. While taking off, he believed the airplane to be empty and did not apply full power to takeoff.

According to the pilot there were no preimpact mechanical failures or malfunctions with the airframe or engine that would have precluded normal operation.

Total time: approx. 1100

Make and Model: approx. 200