



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	WOODBINE, Maryland	Accident Number:	IAD96LA083
Date & Time:	May 11, 1996, 15:30 Local	Registration:	N112LK
Aircraft:	Lithuanian Factory of Aviation LAK-12	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot stated that his weather information was what he had heard on a weather radio in the local area. When he took off there were strong winds with scattered to broken cumulus clouds in the area. Fifteen minutes after being released by the tow airplane, he noticed the 'black wall' of the cold front quickly approaching from the west. He started an immediate descent toward the field. During his approach to the field, he encountered severe turbulence and in order to avoid an extreme crosswind landing, he decided to land diagonally across the runway into the wind. Shortly before touchdown, the pilot encountered a sudden and severe down draft causing his head to hit and break the plexiglass canopy. The glider's right wing tip then hit the ground and the glider did a 360-degree 'ground-loop'.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's decision to fly with inadequate research of forecast weather.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - NORMAL

Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - CROSSWIND

2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - DOWNDRAFT
3. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - TURBULENCE
4. (F) PREFLIGHT PLANNING/PREPARATION - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: LANDING - FLARE/TOUCHDOWN

Factual Information

On May 11, 1996, at 1530 eastern daylight time, a Lithuanian Sport Factory of Aviation, LAK-12 glider, N112LK, impacted the runway while attempting to land during gusty wind conditions at Woodbine Gliderport, in Woodbine, Maryland. The glider was released from the tow line at approximately 1515. The private pilot, the sole occupant, was unharmed and the glider sustained substantial damage. No flight plan had been filed and visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time of the accident. The flight was being conducted under 14 CFR Part 91.

The pilot indicated that he obtained his weather information from a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration weather radio in Sterling, Virginia. The pilot stated that when he took off (Aero-tow), there were strong winds from the south with scattered to broken cumulus clouds. The pilot stated that he was released by the tow airplane at 4200 feet MSL. About 15 minutes later, the pilot stated that he became aware of the cold front (black wall) fast approaching from the west and he started an immediate descent towards the field.

During his approach to the field, the pilot stated that he encountered severe turbulence and that the winds were coming from approximately 270 degrees. The runway is oriented 03/21 degrees and is 1600 feet long by 100 feet wide. In order to avoid an extreme cross wind landing, the pilot stated that he decided to land diagonally across the runway into the wind. Shortly before touchdown at approximately 12-15 feet above the ground, the pilot stated that he encountered a sudden and severe down draft causing his head to hit and break the plexiglass canopy. The pilot stated that the glider's right wing tip then hit the ground, and the glider did a 360 degree "ground-loop" causing the damage.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	54, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Center
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Glider	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Unknown Unknown	Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	407 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Lithuanian Factory of Aviation	Registration:	N112LK
Model/Series:	LAK-12 LAK-12	Aircraft Category:	Glider
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Experimental (Special)	Serial Number:	6220
Landing Gear Type:		Seats:	
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	August 15, 1995 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	
Time Since Last Inspection:	20 Hrs	Engines:	Unknown
Airframe Total Time:	54 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	
Registered Owner:	URS THIERSTEIN/STEVE CRUISE	Rated Power:	
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:		Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:		Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown	Visibility	5 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Unknown	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	30 knots / 43 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	270°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	21°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:		Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	15:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class D

Airport Information

Airport:	WOODBINE GLIDERPORT PVT	Runway Surface Type:	Grass/turf
Airport Elevation:	725 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	3	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	1600 ft / 100 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	39.330829,-77.059745(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Cain, James
Additional Participating Persons:	RAYMOND STINCHCOMB; BALTIMORE , MD
Original Publish Date:	March 31, 1998
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=28055

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person” (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available [here](#).