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INVESTIGATION REPORT

Accident to the paramotor ITV Boxer 2 identified 82-OT

on 5 July 2020
at Pommevic (Tarn-et-Garonne)

Time	Around 9:30[1]
Operator	Private
Type of flight	Instruction
Persons on board	Student pilot
Consequences and damage	Student pilot fatally injured, aeroplane destroyed

This is a courtesy translation by the BEA of the Final Report on the Safety Investigation published in June 2021. As accurate as the translation may be, the original text in French is the work of reference.

[1] Except where otherwise indicated, times in this report are in local time.

Loss of control during initial climb, collision with a powerline, in solo instruction

1 - HISTORY OF THE FLIGHT

The student pilot took off under the supervision of his instructor for a runway circuit in solo flight. During the initial climb, the instructor, on the ground, noticed an oscillation in roll. He gave instructions on the radio to the student pilot who did not manage to stabilize the paramotor. The movement amplified, the paramotor struck a powerline situated at one kilometre from the runway threshold and then collided with the ground.

2 - ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

2.1 Student pilot

The 48-year-old student pilot had started training on a foot-launch paramotor in 2018. He had moved on to a trike paramotor, which he found more comfortable. He had flown in June 2020 with his instructor on a trike paramotor. He had only performed one solo flight.

2.2 Paramotor

The ultralight paramotor consisted of an ITV BOXER 2 wing, an Adventure Fun Flyer trike and a Simonini Mini 2,200 cm^3 motor of 26 hp. According to the manufacturer's documentation, this wing is designed for paramotor beginner pilots. The inspection of the wing did not reveal any singularity or damage that could have contributed to the accident.

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2.3 Radio contact

The student wore a protective helmet equipped with a two-way radio. To transmit, he had to press a button on the helmet earpiece.

2.4 Statements

2.4.1 Instructor

The instructor indicated that he thought that the weather conditions were good for a solo flight. He had just performed a 45 min paramotor flight. He was in radio contact with the student before the take-off. He added that the inflation of the wing and the take-off run went well but that during the initial climb he saw a roll movement developing. He told his student to put his hands to his ears so that he would release the controls and keep a constant power.

He explained that the movement had amplified and that the student pilot had lost control of the paramotor before striking a powerline and then the ground.

The instructor was surprised that the student pilot had not complied with his instructions. They had tested radio communication before the take-off, nevertheless the instructor wondered whether a link problem might have prevented the student from receiving his instructions.

2.4.2 Neighbour

A witness living on the runway axis explained that he was surprised to hear variations in the engine power. He went out of his house and saw the paramotor swinging from side to side. He then saw it strike a powerline and collide with the ground.

This witness specified that he had heard the instructor's voice on the radio loudspeaker, after the accident.

2.5 Weather conditions

The conditions estimated by Météo-France at Pommevic were: west wind 3kt, CAVOK, temperature 20°C.

2.6 Over piloting

The engine torque may cause the trike to oscillate during the take-off. Uncoordinated inputs by the pilot may amplify those oscillations, especially if the pilot makes too many inputs on the wing or engine controls.

3 - CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions are solely based on the information which came to the knowledge of the BEA during the investigation. They are not intended to apportion blame or liability.

During take-off, some probably inappropriate inputs by the pilot on the controls induced a movement of oscillation in roll that amplified until the loss of control then the collision with a powerline.

Some flight manuals recommend releasing the brakes gently, while reducing engine power to decrease the torque effect from the propeller.