

# Learning from Accidents

**A K-21 making an approach to the crosswind runway encountered a tailwind and overshot the intended landing area. During the ground roll, aileron authority was lost and the aircraft collided with a row of parked trailers. The crew were uninjured but the aircraft suffered substantial damage.**

P1 had been working long days, helping to run a competition during a summer heat wave. The day of the accident entailed another early start on what was to be one of the hottest days of the year. Just before lunch the competition scrubbed and club flying began with lots of students to fly. P1 was also the Duty Instructor, assisted by others. During the day another instructor mentioned that the K-21 wheel brake was not very effective. As evening approached, 2 Basic Instructors started to feel fatigued; P1 told them to stop flying but continued himself.

The object of the accident flight was to demonstrate an aerotow launch and allow P2 to practise a crosswind landing. For the latter, P1 planned to land on an out-of-wind runway but overlooked the fact that this would also cause a tailwind on final. The majority of the flight, including the aerotow, was uneventful. As P2 flew the circuit, he encountered a tailwind during the turn onto final. This made it difficult to avoid overshooting the aiming point and the speed increased to 60 – 65 kts. P1 took control but was unable to prevent an overshoot. The ground roll was extended by the tailwind and the ineffective wheel brake. Aileron authority was eventually lost and the starboard wing dropped, causing the aircraft to swing to the right and impact a line of parked trailers.

The club CFI identified **fatigue** and possible **dehydration** as key factors in the accident. These led to **poor decision-making** with respect to P1's own fitness to fly, **overlooking the tailwind** on final and the **ineffectiveness of the wheel brake**, and **delaying airborne intervention** until the accident was almost unavoidable.

***“As a result we will revisit the ‘fit to fly’ theme and ensure all members are reminded of the need for honest and regular self-assessment. The members will be reminded that during daily inspections, any fault should be reported and, if necessary, the aircraft grounded.” – CFI***

## Fitness to fly and Intervention

### *Final Thought ...*

**It's notoriously difficult to assess your own fitness to fly when fatigued and / or dehydrated.** Others are more likely to notice the signs before you do. Of course timely intervention by the instructor remains critical in flight, but a quiet word from a friend on the ground is often all the intervention needed to persuade someone not to fly if they aren't completely fit.