

Report: Pilot error cause of 2009 air tanker crash

By Jeff DeLong, Reno Gazette-Journal

Pilot error likely was responsible for the fatal crash of a single-engine air tanker that smashed into rugged terrain while battling a Northern Nevada wildfire last summer, federal investigators said.

Pilot Dave Jamsa's "failure to maintain a stabilized approach prior to the retardant drop and his subsequent failure to release the retardant load" as he attempted to pull out of a dive caused his aircraft to crash, the National Transportation Safety Board said.

Jamsa, a Montana resident under contract to the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, died in the Aug. 20 crash. He was among eight pilots battling the Hoyt Fire about 125 miles northeast of Reno.

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