



## **National Transportation Safety Board**

**Office of Aviation Safety  
Washington, D.C. 20594-2000  
April 2, 2012**

**ATTACHMENT 5 to the METEOROLOGICAL FACTUAL REPORT  
ANC12IA024**

Written statement provided by a forecaster at the Anchorage WFO:

## STATEMENT

Weather Forecast Office

Anchorage, Alaska

March 30, 2012

My name is Christian Cassell. I am a General Forecaster, and was the forecaster on duty handling the Anchorage zone from 8 am to 6 pm March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

The weather forecast for the night of the 5<sup>th</sup> of March was difficult, especially with predicting precipitation type, which is not something we usually are concerned about at that time of year for the Anchorage area. Normally, a southwest jet streak aloft results in the northeast transport of very warm, moist air, and thus several inches of snow would usually be forecasted. This system was a bit different, as the associated jet streak seemed to be accompanied by a warm, abnormally dry layer at about the same level as the models were predicting the dendritic snow growth layer (near 700 mb). This alerted me that there *could* be a large sub-freezing layer from near the surface up to near 10k feet, but that the temperatures were likely to be no higher than -10 degrees Celsius, if not warmer. In these type of scenarios where the dendritic snow growth layer is mostly dry, but the model forecasts all snow, freezing drizzle or freezing rain is a distinct possibility. I mentioned in several forecast zones the possibility of freezing drizzle, including for the Anchorage zone for the night of the March 5 with the afternoon forecast package. Later that night, I did notice that Freezing Rain Advisories had been issued for Anchorage and the Matanuska Valley based on freezing drizzle reports in the area. In retrospect, based on the model forecast soundings, I would have expected a deep area of icing conditions from the surface to near 10k feet.

I've attached a Shift Log post I made at the end of my forecast shift sometime between 4 and 6 pm on March 5. It is informal, yet highlights my thoughts about the forecast and is meant to be read by the oncoming shift that evening.

*chrisc [christianc]* : Lowered snow accumulations just a touch for tonight for Anchorage (1-3 instead of 2-3). Pronounced dry slot and warming aloft near 700 mb will present some problems with p-type potentially...as the saturation layer warms to near or above -10 Celsius. Since Bethel, Dillingham, and King Salmon all reported freezing drizzle with this feature, decided to include it in the 101, 111, and 121 forecasts for tonight along with the snow.