



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	YAKUTAT, Alaska	Accident Number:	ANC96FA139
Date & Time:	August 31, 1996, 12:20 Local	Registration:	N7345N
Aircraft:	Cessna 206	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Positioning		

Analysis

The pilot had departed for a remote fiord in the amphibious float equipped airplane to pick up several passengers. The flight was reported overdue and search personnel located the airplane floating upside down in the area of the destination. The landing gear was extended. The front windshield was broken out and the pilot's seat belt was unbuckled. The pilot was not found and is presumed to have received fatal injuries. The pilot was the only pilot for the operator, and was the director of operations and the chief pilot.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's landing on the water with the landing gear inadvertently extended.

Findings

Occurrence #1: NOSE OVER
Phase of Operation: LANDING - FLARE/TOUCHDOWN

Findings

1. TERRAIN CONDITION - WATER
2. (C) WHEELS DOWN LANDING IN WATER - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

History of the Flight

On August 31, 1996, about 1220 Alaska daylight time, an amphibious float equipped Cessna 206, N7345N, crashed during landing in a remote area about 11 miles northeast of Yakutat, Alaska. The airplane was being operated as a visual flight rules (VFR) cross-country positioning flight under Title 14 CFR Part 91 when the accident occurred. The airplane, registered to and operated by Totem Air Inc., Yakutat, Alaska, sustained substantial damage. Totem Air Inc., is a business subsidiary of the Yakutat Kwaan Native Corporation, Yakutat. The certificated commercial pilot, the sole occupant, was not located by search and rescue personnel and is presumed to have received fatal injuries. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed in the area of the accident. VFR company flight following procedures were in effect. The flight originated at the Yakutat airport about 1156.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), automated flight service station (AFSS) in Juneau, Alaska, reported that the pilot requested a special visual flight rules (SVFR) departure from the Yakutat airport at 1154:56. At 1156:54, the pilot departed the Yakutat airport and reported clear of the surface area at 1200:20 by stating, "Juneau radio, 7345N is clear of the zone to the northeast." No further communication was received from the pilot.

The operator reported the pilot was planning to land in an area known as Halibut Cove in the lower section of the Russell Fiord to pick up several passengers. The flight did not return and was reported overdue at 1411. The airplane was located floating upside down at 1446 by search aircraft. After arrival at the scene, search personnel reported that the airplane's windshield was broken out of the airframe and the pilot's seat belt was unbuckled. The pilot was not located.

The accident occurred during the hours of daylight at latitude 59 degrees, 36.4 minutes north and longitude 139 degrees, 19.7 minutes west.

Crew Information

The pilot held an airline transport pilot certificate with an airplane multiengine land rating. He also held commercial pilot privileges with airplane single-engine land and sea ratings. The most recent second-class medical certificate was issued to the pilot on April 9, 1996, and contained no limitations.

No personal flight records were located for the pilot and the aeronautical experience listed on page 3 of this report was obtained from the pilot/operator report filed by the operator. According to the report, the pilot's total aeronautical experience consisted of 10,500 hours, of

which 59.6 hours were accrued in the accident airplane make and model. In the preceding 90 and 30 days prior to the accident, the report lists a total of 59.6 and 20.1 hours respectively.

The pilot was listed as the director of operations and chief pilot in the operator's operations specifications manual. The manual's effective date was June 17, 1996.

Aircraft Information

The airplane had accumulated a total time in service of 1,329.4 hours. Examination of the maintenance records revealed that the most recent annual inspection of the airframe and engine was accomplished on April 24, 1996, 97.1 hours before the accident. In addition, a 100-hour inspection was completed on August 23, 1996, 5.9 hours before the accident. The maintenance records note that the engine was installed in the airplane on January 6, 1988. At that time the airplane hour meter was 745.0 and the engine had accrued 10 hours since a major overhaul.

The airplane had Wipaire Inc., Wipline Model 3730 amphibious floats installed on June 27, 1995. The landing gear system in the floats are powered by an electro-hydraulic power pack installed in the left-hand float baggage compartment. An emergency hand pump is located in the cockpit for operation in case of power pack or electrical failure. A set of 4 blue lights (installed on the instrument panel) indicates a gear up position. A set of green lights indicates a gear down position. Adjacent to the position lights is the landing gear handle. The airplane had mirrors mounted near the tip of each wing to allow viewing of the landing gear position from the cockpit.

Meteorological Information

The closest official weather observation station is Yakutat, Alaska. When the pilot requested the SVFR departure at 1154, the flight service station specialist provided weather information that included: Wind, 130 at 9 knots; visibility, 6 miles in mist; sky condition and ceiling, 500 feet broken, 4,700 feet overcast; temperature, 55.4 degrees F; dew point, 53.6 degrees F; altimeter, 29.91 inHg.

At 1210, a special weather report was reporting in part: Wind, 140 degrees at 6 knots; visibility, 7 miles; sky condition and ceiling, 500 feet scattered, 5,500 feet overcast; temperature, 57.2 degrees F; dew point, 53.6 degrees F; altimeter, 29.92 inHg.

Communications

The pilot obtained a special VFR clearance from the Juneau AFSS. A transcript of the air to ground communications between the airplane and the AFSS is included in this report.

Wreckage and Impact Information

The operator reported following the arrival of search personnel in the area, the airplane was floating upside down with the landing gear extended. The airplane was then tethered to the shore to prevent it from floating away. The operator planned to recover the airplane after search efforts were completed. The operator was advised to inform the National Transportation Safety Board investigator-in-charge (IIC) of any wreckage recovery. The operator reported several attempts to salvage the airplane, including an effort to turn the airplane over. This effort resulted in the tail section of the airplane being torn off.

On September 5, 1996, an FAA Airworthiness inspector traveled to the area of the accident and confirmed the landing gear was in the extended position. On September 25, 1996, the NTSB IIC attempted to travel to the area where the airplane was moored, and reported to still be upside down. Extreme weather conditions prohibited travel to the area.

On October 9, 1996, the NTSB IIC was notified by personnel with Taquan Air, Ketchikan, Alaska, that the airplane was sold to and salvaged by Taquan Air, and they were inquiring about the airplane records. They reported the president of the Yakutat Kwaan Native Corporation had engaged them in discussions of salvage on September 23, 1996. Personnel from Taquan Air traveled to Yakutat on September 26, 1996, and began salvaging the airplane on September 27, 1996. The airplane was cut into several sections, loaded into a container, and shipped to Ketchikan. The Yakutat Kwaan Native Corporation did not inform the NTSB IIC of the salvage operation. Taquan Air was not aware of the NTSB's request to examine the wreckage.

The container of salvaged sections of the airplane arrived in Ketchikan on October 14, 1996. The wreckage was inspected by the NTSB IIC on October 15, 1996, in Ketchikan. The floats and wings were removed from the airplane. The engine and propeller was also removed. The fuselage was cut into several segments. The empennage was missing.

Survival Aspects

The pilot was reported to be wearing hip boots and a personal floatation jacket. The U.S. Coast Guard noted that the pilot's floatation jacket, a Stormy Seas Float Coat, did not contain any self inflating CO2 cartridges.

Search and Rescue

Search personnel, including the U.S. Coast Guard, Yakutat Police Department, the operator, and numerous volunteers, conducted an extensive air and ground search for the pilot without results. The Coast Guard's search for the pilot was suspended on September 3, 1996. The Yakutat Police Department continued search operations until September 6, 1996. The operator continued searching until September 10, 1996.

Additional Information

Totem Air Inc., was issued a new operating certificate and operations specifications on August

19, 1994, due to a corporate name change. A review of FAA records at the Juneau Flight Standards District Office revealed the company did not conduct operations and no maintenance was performed on company aircraft between October 1995, and April 1996. The company resumed operations on April 8, 1996, with one employee. The FAA noted on May 24, 1996, the company flew 84.2 hours since resuming operations.

The FAA issued new operations specifications to the operator on June 17, 1996. The pilot was listed as the director of operations and chief pilot. The position of director of maintenance was vacant. On the same date, the pilot completed a FAR Part 135 check ride. The operation specifications contained a limitation that no operations were to be conducted between November 21, and March 31. This limitation provided the operator with the flexibility to conduct only seasonal operations.

Due to the nature of damage incurred during the salvage of the airplane, Supplements A and B, Wreckage and Cockpit Documentation forms, were not completed.

Wreckage Release

The Safety Board did not take custody of the wreckage. No parts or components were retained by the Safety Board.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline transport; Commercial	Age:	63, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Single-engine sea; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	April 9, 1996
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	10500 hours (Total, all aircraft), 60 hours (Total, this make and model), 8500 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Cessna	Registration:	N7345N
Model/Series:	206 206	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	20603623
Landing Gear Type:	Amphibian; Float	Seats:	6
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	August 23, 1996 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3600 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	6 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	1329 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	IO-520
Registered Owner:	TOTEM AIR INC.	Rated Power:	300 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	On-demand air taxi (135)
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	T4TA

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	YAK ,33 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	11 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	14:30 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	215°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 1700 ft AGL	Visibility	7 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 3300 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	5 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	143°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	13°C / 12°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	, AK (YAK)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	Company VFR
Destination:	RUSSELL FIORD , AK	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	12:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	59.51062,-139.709411(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Erickson, Scott
Additional Participating Persons:	HUGH DEVLIN; JUNEAU , AK
Original Publish Date:	October 14, 1997
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=2765

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](#).