



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	KOTZEBUE, Alaska	Accident Number:	ANC97LA049
Date & Time:	April 5, 1997, 15:00 Local	Registration:	N112PA
Aircraft:	Piper PA-12	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	3 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot landed in a remote area with a ski equipped airplane. He planned to transport an injured person and another passenger to an airport. The pilot began to taxi across a frozen and snow covered river to begin the takeoff roll. While taxiing, the right ski broke through a layer of soft ice, and the pilot applied engine power to exit the hole. The right main landing gear failed at the fuselage attach point.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the pilot's selection of unsuitable terrain for taxi and takeoff. Soft/snow covered terrain was a related factor.

Findings

Occurrence #1: ON GROUND/WATER ENCOUNTER WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: TAXI - TO TAKEOFF

Findings

1. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - SNOW COVERED
 2. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - SOFT
 3. (C) UNSUITABLE TERRAIN OR TAKEOFF/LANDING/TAXI AREA - SELECTED - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #2: GEAR COLLAPSED

Phase of Operation: TAXI - TO TAKEOFF

Findings

4. LANDING GEAR,MAIN GEAR ATTACHMENT - OVERLOAD

Factual Information

On April 5, 1997, about 1500 Alaska standard time, a ski equipped Piper PA-12, N112PA, encountered soft terrain while taxiing for takeoff, about 20 miles north of Kotzebue, Alaska. The airplane was being operated as a visual flight rules (VFR) local area personal flight when the accident occurred. The airplane, registered to and operated by the pilot, sustained substantial damage. The certificated commercial pilot, and two passengers, were not injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed.

On April 5, 1997, about 1830, the pilot reported in a telephone conversation with the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigator-in-charge (IIC), that he was a volunteer pilot supporting a snow machine race. He landed to pick up an injured driver to transport him, and another passenger, to Kotzebue. While taxiing for takeoff, the right ski broke through a layer of soft ice, and he applied engine power to exit the hole. The right main landing gear was broken at the fuselage attach point.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	31, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Single-engine sea; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Front
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:	January 24, 1997
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	548 hours (Total, all aircraft), 156 hours (Total, this make and model), 424 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 14 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 8 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N112PA
Model/Series:	PA-12 PA-12	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	12-2158
Landing Gear Type:	Ski	Seats:	3
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	April 2, 1996 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1750 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	86 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	2934 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-320-A2B
Registered Owner:	PAUL J. BUCKLE	Rated Power:	150 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:		Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:		Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown	Visibility	5 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 3000 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	20 knots / 30 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	80°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	0°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	(OTZ)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	11:15 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:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	2 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	3 None	Latitude, Longitude:	67.240295,-161.190597(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Erickson, Scott
Additional Participating Persons:	JIM PORTER; FAIRBANKS , AK
Original Publish Date:	May 29, 1998
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=2983

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