



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

<b>Location:</b>	SOLDOTNA, Alaska	<b>Accident Number:</b>	ANC97LA070
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	March 30, 1997, 14:15 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N920NB
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Piper J-3	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	1 None
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

## Analysis

The pilot reported that his airplane hit the runway hard while landing in gusty wind conditions. The airplane bounced, landed hard again, and collapsed the right main landing gear. The right wing struck the ground, damaging the main spar.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's inadequate compensation for the gusty wind conditions, and his improper recovery from a bounced landing. A factor associated with the accident was the gusty wind.

## Findings

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

### Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - GUSTS
2. (C) COMPENSATION FOR WIND CONDITIONS - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (C) RECOVERY FROM BOUNCED LANDING - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: MAIN GEAR COLLAPSED  
Phase of Operation: LANDING - FLARE/TOUCHDOWN

Findings

4. LANDING GEAR,MAIN GEAR - OVERLOAD

## Factual Information

On March 30, 1997, about 1415 Alaska standard time, a wheel equipped Piper J-3 airplane, N920NB, sustained substantial damage while landing at the Soldotna Airport, Soldotna, Alaska. The solo private pilot was not injured. The local, 14 CFR Part 91 flight operated in visual meteorological conditions without a flight plan.

A Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) inspector inspected the airplane and interviewed the pilot on May 12. According to the FAA inspector, the pilot was landing in gusty wind conditions. The airplane landed hard, bounced, and upon the second contact with the runway, the right main landing gear collapsed. The right wing subsequently struck the runway, and damaged the main spar.

The pilot did not complete the NTSB Accident Report Form that was mailed to him.

### Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Private	<b>Age:</b>	58, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine land	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Unknown
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	No
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 3 Valid Medical-w/ waivers/lim	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	February 20, 1997
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	UNK	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	
<b>Flight Time:</b>	240 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Piper	<b>Registration:</b>	N920NB
<b>Model/Series:</b>	J-3 J-3	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Airplane
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Tailwheel	<b>Seats:</b>	2
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	Unknown	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	1220 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>		<b>Engines:</b>	1 Reciprocating
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>		<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Continental
<b>ELT:</b>		<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	A65-8
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	ROBERT J. CONDON	<b>Rated Power:</b>	65 Horsepower
<b>Operator:</b>		<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None
<b>Operator Does Business As:</b>		<b>Operator Designator Code:</b>	

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual (VMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>		<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	
<b>Observation Time:</b>		<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Clear	<b>Visibility</b>	
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	Unknown	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	/	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Wind Direction:</b>	0°	<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>		<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	(SQX)	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	None
<b>Destination:</b>		<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>	00:00 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class G

## Airport Information

<b>Airport:</b>	SOLDOTNA SXQ	<b>Runway Surface Type:</b>	Asphalt
<b>Airport Elevation:</b>	107 ft msl	<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	
<b>Runway Used:</b>	25	<b>IFR Approach:</b>	None
<b>Runway Length/Width:</b>	4973 ft / 130 ft	<b>VFR Approach/Landing:</b>	Traffic pattern

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 None	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>		<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	1 None	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	60.320915,-150.789566(est)

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Labelle, James
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	GENE CORDLE; ANCHORAGE , AK
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	May 4, 1998
<b>Last Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Investigation Class:</b>	<a href="#">Class</a>
<b>Note:</b>	
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	<a href="https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=3003">https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=3003</a>

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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](#).