



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	PRUDHOE BAY, Alaska	Accident Number:	ANC97LA088
Date & Time:	June 20, 1997, 16:00 Local	Registration:	N756DJ
Aircraft:	Cessna 206	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 135: Air taxi & commuter - Scheduled		

Analysis

The pilot reported he was in a descent to land when the cargo door opened and struck the side of the fuselage, causing substantial damage to the airframe. He said he thought he had latched and locked the door properly before he departed on the accident flight, but when it opened, he realized he had not. Postaccident inspection of the door and locking mechanism disclosed no evidence of any preimpact mechanical anomalies.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's improper preflight inspection of the airplane and failure to properly secure the baggage door.

Findings

Occurrence #1: MISCELLANEOUS/OTHER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - NORMAL

Findings

1. (C) DOOR,CARGO/BAGGAGE - NOT SECURED
2. (C) AIRCRAFT PREFLIGHT - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

On June 20, 1997, about 1600 Alaska daylight time, a wheel equipped Cessna 206 airplane, N756DJ, operated by Warbelow's Air Adventures as a scheduled commuter flight under 14 CFR Part 135, sustained substantial damage while descending to land at the Deadhorse Airport, Prudhoe Bay, Alaska. The solo airline transport pilot was not injured. The flight departed Nuiqsut, Alaska, and was en route to Prudhoe Bay. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and a VFR flight plan was filed.

According to the operator, the pilot was flying a scheduled commuter flight route with cargo only aboard. When the pilot reduced engine power and begin to descend for a landing at the Deadhorse Airport, the aft cargo door opened and slammed against the side of the fuselage, resulting in substantial damage to the airframe. The pilot continued to Prudhoe Bay, and made an uneventful landing.

The pilot wrote in his report to the NTSB that he thought he had latched and locked the door, but realized when the door opened that he had not secured it properly.

Postaccident inspection of the airplane by FAA inspectors at Fairbanks, Alaska, disclosed damage to fuselage formers and stringers. The door latching mechanism was also examined and found to function satisfactorily, with no observed mechanical deficiencies.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline transport; Flight instructor	Age:	48, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane multi-engine; Airplane single-engine; Instrument airplane	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Unknown Unknown	Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	6200 hours (Total, all aircraft), 500 hours (Total, this make and model), 6100 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 240 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 60 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 10 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Cessna	Registration:	N756DJ
Model/Series:	206 206	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	20604005
Landing Gear Type:		Seats:	6
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	May 28, 1997 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3600 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	52 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	5766 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	IO-520-F13B
Registered Owner:	WARBELOW'S AIR ADVENTURES	Rated Power:	300 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	Commuter air carrier (135), On-demand air taxi (135)
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	WVBA

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:	Scattered / 20000 ft AGL	Visibility	50 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	13 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	70°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	16°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	NUIQSUT , AK (AQT)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	VFR
Destination:	(PASC)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	00:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class E

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 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	70.430969,-149.289947(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Labelle, James

Additional Participating Persons: DAN WALSH (FAA); FAIRBANKS , AK

Original Publish Date: November 10, 1998

Last Revision Date:

Investigation Class: [Class](#)

Note:

Investigation Docket: <https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=3018>

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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](#).