



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	COEUR D'ALENE, Idaho	Accident Number:	SEA90LA037
Date & Time:	January 30, 1990, 19:15 Local	Registration:	N56EA
Aircraft:	SWEARINGEN SA226TC	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	21 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 135: Air taxi & commuter - Scheduled		

Analysis

THE PILOT REPORTED THAT AFTER REACHING THE AIRPORT, IMC PREVAILED AND LIGHT SNOW WAS FALLING. AT THE DECISION HEIGHT, THE APPROACH LIGHTS AND THE RUNWAY LIGHTS WERE IN SIGHT. THE RUNWAY WAS COVERED WITH SNOW. DURING THE FLARE TO LAND, THE PILOT LOST DEPTH PERCEPTION AND RUNWAY ALIGNMENT FROM BLOWING SNOW. THE AIRPLANE TOUCHED DOWN AND THE PILOT BELIEVED THE PLANE WAS SLIGHTLY LEFT OF THE CENTERLINE. HE CORRECTED WITH RIGHT RUDDER; HOWEVER, THE AIRPLANE CONTINUED TO TRAVEL LEFT. SUBSEQUENTLY, IT WENT OFF THE RUNWAY AND CAME TO REST IN A SNOWBANK WITH DAMAGE.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE LOSS OF THE FLIGHT CREW'S VISUAL PERCEPTION, DUE TO AN UNFORESEEN WHITEOUT CONDITION. A RELATED FACTOR WAS THE SNOWBANK.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER
Phase of Operation: LANDING - FLARE/TOUCHDOWN

Findings

1. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - DARK NIGHT
2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - SNOW

3. (C) WEATHER CONDITION - WHITEOUT
4. PROPER ALIGNMENT - NOT POSSIBLE
5. (C) VISUAL/AURAL PERCEPTION

Occurrence #2: ON GROUND/WATER ENCOUNTER WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: LANDING - ROLL

Findings

6. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - SNOWBANK

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline transport; Commercial; Flight instructor	Age:	34, 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:	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane multi-engine; Airplane single-engine; Instrument airplane	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 1 Valid Medical—no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	January 22, 1990
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	6030 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1847 hours (Total, this make and model), 5660 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 53 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 31 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 5 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	SWEARINGEN	Registration:	N56EA
Model/Series:	SA226TC SA226TC	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:		Serial Number:	TC399
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	21
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	January 18, 1990 Continuous airworthiness	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	13230 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	57 Hrs	Engines:	2 Turbo prop
Airframe Total Time:	9753 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	GARRETT
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	TPE-331
Registered Owner:	UNKNOWN	Rated Power:	840 Horsepower
Operator:	EMPIRE AIRLINES	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	Commuter air carrier (135)
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument (IMC)	Condition of Light:	Night/dark
Observation Facility, Elevation:		Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:		Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown	Visibility	2 miles
Lowest Ceiling:		Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	5 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	140°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	-1°C / -1°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	N/A - Blowing - Snow		
Departure Point:	SEATTLE , WA (SEA)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	IFR
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	IFR
Departure Time:	18:08 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class E

Airport Information

Airport:	COEUR D'ALENE COE	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt;Snow
Airport Elevation:	2318 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Snow
Runway Used:	5	IFR Approach:	ILS
Runway Length/Width:	7400 ft / 140 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Straight-in

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	2 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	19 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	21 None	Latitude, Longitude:	47.589954,-116.910491(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Eckrote, Debra
Additional Participating Persons:	CHARLENE MUTH; SEATTLE , WA
Original Publish Date:	September 30, 1991
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=41164

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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](#).