



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	SEELEY LAKE, Montana	Accident Number:	SEA96LA018
Date & Time:	November 15, 1995, 10:20 Local	Registration:	N8431D
Aircraft:	PIPER PA-22-160	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

THE PILOT REPORTED THAT HE OVERFLEW THE RUNWAY TO TRY TO DETERMINE THE DEPTH OF THE SNOW ON THE RUNWAY. THE PILOT SAW TIRE TRACKS NEXT TO THE RUNWAY AND THOUGHT THAT THE DEPTH WAS ABOUT TWO INCHES. THE PILOT INITIATED AN APPROACH FOR A LANDING. DURING THE LANDING ROLL, THE NOSE WHEEL DUG INTO THE SNOW AND THE AIRPLANE NOSED OVER. IT WAS LATER DETERMINED THAT THE SNOW WAS FIVE INCHES DEEP WITH A CRUSTY TOP LAYER. THE AIRPORT/FACILITY DIRECTORY STATES THAT THE AIRPORT WAS CLOSED AT THE TIME OF THE ACCIDENT.

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 LANDING. THE SNOW COVERED RUNWAY WAS A FACTOR.

Findings

Occurrence #1: NOSE OVER
Phase of Operation: LANDING - ROLL

Findings

1. (F) AIRPORT FACILITIES, RUNWAY/LANDING AREA CONDITION - SNOW COVERED
2. (C) UNSUITABLE TERRAIN OR TAKEOFF/LANDING/TAXI AREA - SELECTED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

On November 15, 1995, at 1020 mountain standard time, a Piper PA- 22-160, N8431D, nosed over during the landing roll at the Seeley Lake Airport, Seeley Lake, Montana. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time and no flight plan was filed for the personal flight. The airplane was substantially damaged and the private pilot and his passenger were not injured. The flight originated from Butte, Montana, on November 15, 1995, at 0830.

During a telephone interview and subsequent written statement, the pilot stated that he overflew the runway twice to try to determine the depth of the snow that covered the runway. The pilot saw vehicle tracks next to the runway and thought that the depth was about two inches. The pilot initiated an approach to runway 34, and after the airplane touched down and began the landing roll, the nose gear dug into the snow and the airplane nosed over.

It was later determined that the depth of the snow was approximately five inches deep with a crusty top layer.

The Northwest Airport/Facility Directory states that the airport is closed from November-May.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	45, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	June 14, 1995
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	1240 hours (Total, all aircraft), 150 hours (Total, this make and model), 1180 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 18 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 8 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	PIPER	Registration:	N8431D
Model/Series:	PA-22-160 PA-22-160	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	22-5686
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	June 2, 1995 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2000 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	18 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	3193 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	O-320-B2A
Registered Owner:	LARRY G. BREWER	Rated Power:	160 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:	Clear	Visibility	20 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	0°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	4°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	BUTTE , MT (BTU)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	08:30 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	SEELEY LAKE 23S	Runway Surface Type:	Gravel
Airport Elevation:	4235 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Snow
Runway Used:	34	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	3475 ft / 75 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Traffic pattern

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	47.239799,-113.530822(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Eckrote, Debra
Additional Participating Persons:	DON PAUL; HELENA , MT
Original Publish Date:	February 27, 1996
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=42310

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