



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	ELKO, Nevada	Accident Number:	LAX99LA194
Date & Time:	May 21, 1999, 17:09 Local	Registration:	N185FM
Aircraft:	Cessna A185F	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	4 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot first contacted the air traffic control tower about 10 miles southwest of the airport. He was instructed to enter a left traffic pattern for runway 23, and informed that the winds were from 330 degrees at 10 knots. While abeam the threshold on the downwind leg, he was cleared to land, and informed that the winds were now from 340 degrees at 7 knots and the wind velocity had increased to 18 knots. The pilot then requested to enter a right downwind for runway 30, which was approved, and was told that the winds were now variable from 300 to 030 degrees from 10 to 18 knots. While on final approach for runway 30, he was informed that the winds had shifted to 020 degrees at 15 knots. The final wind check before landing indicated that the winds were from 030 degrees at 16 knots. The aircraft touched down and bounced then veered toward the left edge of the runway. The pilot stated that as he attempted to correct for the left drift, the right wing rose up and the aircraft crossed the runway in a right arc on the left main wheel and ground looped at the right edge of the runway. He further reported that approximately 15 miles southwest of Elko he had noticed lightning coming from a cloud 2 to 3 miles northeast of the airport. He also stated that about the same time, an airplane that had just departed reported that they were experiencing major updrafts and downdrafts east of the airport.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The failure of the pilot to adequately compensate for the variable and gusty winds, and, to maintain directional control of the aircraft while landing.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - ON GROUND/WATER

Phase of Operation: LANDING - ROLL

Findings

1. WEATHER CONDITION - SUDDEN WINDSHIFT
2. WEATHER CONDITION - GUSTS
3. (C) COMPENSATION FOR WIND CONDITIONS - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (C) DIRECTIONAL CONTROL - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: ON GROUND/WATER ENCOUNTER WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: LANDING - ROLL

Factual Information

On May 21, 1999, at 1709 hours Pacific daylight time, a Cessna A185F, N185FM, ground looped while landing at the Elko, Nevada, airport. The aircraft, owned and operated by the Elko Daily Free Press, Elko, sustained substantial damage. The private pilot and three passengers were not injured. The personal cross-country flight conducted under the provisions of 14 CFR Part 91, originated at the Ukiah, California, airport about 1427, and was terminating at the time of the accident. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and no flight plan was filed.

The pilot reported that he first contacted the Elko Air Traffic Control Tower about 10 miles southwest of the airport. He was instructed to enter a left traffic pattern for runway 23, and informed that the winds were from 330 degrees at 10 knots. While the pilot was abeam the threshold on the downwind leg, he was cleared to land, and informed that the winds were now from 340 degrees at 7 knots, and that the wind velocity had increased to 18 knots. He then requested to enter a right downwind for runway 30. The tower approved his request and reported that the winds were now variable from 300 to 030 degrees from 10 to 18 knots. While on final approach for runway 30, the tower informed the pilot that the winds had shifted to 020 degrees at 15 knots. The final wind check before landing indicated that the winds were from 030 degrees at 16 knots.

The pilot reported that the aircraft touched down and bounced then veered toward the left edge of the runway. He stated that as he attempted to correct for the left drift, the right wing rose up, and the aircraft crossed the runway in a right arc on the left main wheel and ground looped at the right edge of the runway.

The pilot further reported that approximately 15 miles southwest of Elko he had noticed lightning coming from a cloud 2 to 3 miles northeast of the Elko airport. He also stated that about the same time, an airplane that had just departed Elko reported to the tower that they were experiencing major updrafts and downdrafts east of the airport.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	41, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
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 3 Valid Medical-w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	July 27, 1998
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	1129 hours (Total, all aircraft), 915 hours (Total, this make and model), 941 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 8 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 7 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Cessna	Registration:	N185FM
Model/Series:	A185F A185F	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	18503126
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	November 4, 1998 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3350 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	22 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	2374 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	TSIO-520-D
Registered Owner:	ELKO DAILY FREE PRESS	Rated Power:	285 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:	EKO ,5140 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:	16:50 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 8000 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	12 knots / 16 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	30°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	24°C / -1°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	UKIAH , CA (UKI)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	(EKO)	Type of Clearance:	VFR
Departure Time:	14:27 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class D

Airport Information

Airport:	ELKO MUNI-JC HARRIS FLD EKO	Runway Surface Type:	Asphalt
Airport Elevation:	5140 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	30	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	2871 ft / 60 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Full stop

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	3 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	4 None	Latitude, Longitude:	40.950584,-115.789146(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Rich, Jeff
Additional Participating Persons:	RUSS STONE; RENO , NV
Original Publish Date:	November 22, 2000
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=46434

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

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](#).