Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	DILLINGHAM, Alaska	**Accident Number:**	ANC99LA093
Date & Time:	July 19, 1999, 09:20 Local	**Registration:**	N3780M
Aircraft:	Piper PA-12	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Defining Event:		**Injuries:**	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation		

Analysis

The pilot told the NTSB investigator-in-charge (IIC) during a telephone interview, and in his NTSB Pilot/Operator report, the airplane had been parked in the rain for two days with the fuel tanks about 1/3 full. About 10 minutes after takeoff, while in cruise at 300 feet above the ground, the engine momentarily ran rough. He said he applied carburetor heat, adjusted the throttle, and the engine smoothed out. About 10 minutes later the engine suddenly lost power. The pilot landed the airplane on tundra, and it nosed over. The pilot told the IIC that he suspected water contamination in the fuel.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The inadequate preflight by the pilot, which failed to detect water contamination of the airplane's fuel.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER
Phase of Operation: CRUISE

Findings
1. (C) FLUID,FUEL - CONTAMINATION,WATER
2. (C) AIRCRAFT PREFLIGHT - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

Occurrence #3: NOSE OVER
Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY LANDING

Findings
3. TERRAIN CONDITION - TUNDRA

Factual Information

On July 19, 1999, about 0920 Alaska daylight time, a tundra tire equipped Piper PA-12 airplane, N3780M, sustained substantial damage during a forced landing about 28 nautical miles southwest of Dillingham, Alaska, at 58 degrees 54.42 minutes north latitude, 159 degrees 20.33 minutes west longitude. The solo commercial pilot was not injured. The airplane was being operated by the pilot under 14 CFR Part 91 as a business flight in support of his construction firm. The flight departed Togiak, Alaska, about 0900 for Dillingham. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time of the accident, and no flight plan was filed.

The pilot told the NTSB investigator-in-charge (IIC) during a telephone interview on July 20, that the airplane had been parked in the rain for two days prior to the accident, with the fuel tanks about 1/3 full. He said that he drained and checked the fuel tanks for contamination prior to the flight, with no anomalies noted. The pilot stated about 10 miles from Togiak, the engine momentarily ran rough, so he adjusted the throttle and applied carburetor heat, and the engine smoothed out. He said about 10 minutes later, cruising about 300 feet above the ground, the engine suddenly quit. The pilot landed the airplane on tundra, and the airplane nosed over, bending the left wing lift-struts.

The pilot stated during the interview, and in his NTSB Pilot/Operator report, that he took off with about 14 gallons fuel, and suspects water was in the fuel.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial; Flight instructor	**Age:**	49,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	**Seat Occupied:**	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	**Restraint Used:**	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	**Second Pilot Present:**	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane single-engine; Instrument airplane	**Toxicology Performed:**	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	September 14, 1998
Occupational Pilot:	No	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	
Flight Time:	2000 hours (Total, all aircraft), 5000 hours (Total, this make and model), 1800 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 100 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 100 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	**Registration:**	N3780M
Model/Series:	PA-12 PA-12	**Aircraft Category:**	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		**Amateur Built:**	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	**Serial Number:**	12-2710
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	**Seats:**	3
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	April 1, 1999 Annual	**Certified Max Gross Wt.:**	1750 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	100 Hrs	**Engines:**	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		**Engine Manufacturer:**	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, activated, aided in locating accident	**Engine Model/Series:**	O-320
Registered Owner:	STEVEN G. JOACHIM	**Rated Power:**	150 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:	Unknown	**Visibility**	5 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 1000 ft AGL	**Visibility (RVR):**	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	5 knots /	**Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:**	/
Wind Direction:	270°	**Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:**	/
Altimeter Setting:		**Temperature/Dew Point:**	16°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	TOGIAK , AK (TOG)	**Type of Flight Plan Filed:**	None
Destination:	(DLG)	**Type of Clearance:**	None
Departure Time:	09:00 Local	**Type of Airspace:**	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:		**Runway Surface Type:**	
Airport Elevation:		**Runway Surface Condition:**	
Runway Used:	0	**IFR Approach:**	None
Runway Length/Width:		**VFR Approach/Landing:**	Forced 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:**	58.819229,-157.859008(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Thomas, Matthew
Additional Participating Persons:	JOHNNY L POSEY (FAA FSDO); ANCHORAGE , AK
Original Publish Date:	August 3, 2000
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=46866