



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	GREAT FALLS, Montana	Accident Number:	SEA01LA018
Date & Time:	November 12, 2000, 15:15 Local	Registration:	N1594A
Aircraft:	Piper PA-20	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The private pilot was landing the tail-wheel equipped airplane on a snow covered off-airport landing site. Shortly after touch down, the airplane rapidly decelerated in the deep snow and nosed over.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's improper decision to land on unsuitable terrain. Factors include snow covered terrain.

Findings

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

Findings

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

Factual Information

On November 12, 2000, about 1515 mountain standard time, a tail-wheel equipped Piper PA-20, N1594A, sustained substantial damage while landing at an off airport landing site approximately 18 miles south of Great Falls, Montana. The airplane was owned by the pilot, and was being operated as a personal/pleasure flight under the provisions of Title 14, CFR Part 91, when the accident occurred. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and no flight plan was filed for the local flight. The private pilot, the sole occupant of the airplane, was not injured. The flight originated at Great Falls International Airport, Great Falls, Montana, approximately one hour and 15 minutes prior to the accident.

According to the pilot, he was conducting a practice emergency approach and landing to a remote, snow covered, off-airport landing site. He reported that when the aircraft touched down, in a three-point attitude, the main wheels contacted deep snow on the landing surface and the airplane subsequently nosed over. The airplane's right and left wing sustained substantial damage.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	48, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	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-w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	February 3, 2000
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	630 hours (Total, all aircraft), 629 hours (Total, this make and model), 590 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 30 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 11 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N1594A
Model/Series:	PA-20 PA-20	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	833
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	November 19, 1999 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1950 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	157 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	4186 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-320
Registered Owner:	RAYMOND D. FOWLER	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:	GTF ,3677 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	18 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	14:56 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	360°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	210°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	22°C / 11°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	, MT (GTF)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	14:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	Snow
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	Simulated 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:	47.289871,-111.340606(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Hogenson, Dennis
Additional Participating Persons:	KEN CONRAD;
Original Publish Date:	July 17, 2001
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	The NTSB traveled to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=50626

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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](#).