



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Anvik, Alaska	Accident Number:	ANC01LA036
Date & Time:	February 6, 2001, 14:30 Local	Registration:	N3334M
Aircraft:	Piper PA-12	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Serious, 1 Minor, 1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The private certificated pilot departed a remote village on a VFR cross-country flight along the Yukon River. As the flight progressed, the pilot said he encountered fog, and descended to maintain visual contact with the ground. The airplane suddenly collided with snow-covered terrain, and received damage to the wings, fuselage, and landing gear. Weather conditions in the area were reported as 100 feet overcast, and the visibility was 1.25 statute miles.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's continued VFR flight into instrument meteorological conditions, and subsequent in-flight collision with terrain during descent. Factors in the accident were the presence of fog, and snow-covered terrain.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER
Phase of Operation: CRUISE

- Findings
1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - FOG
 2. (C) VFR FLIGHT INTO IMC - CONTINUED - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT

Findings

3. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - SNOW COVERED

Factual Information

On February 6, 2001, about 1430 Alaska standard time, a ski equipped Piper PA-12 airplane, N3334M, sustained substantial damage during a collision with snow-covered terrain, about 7 miles south-southeast of Anvik, Alaska. The airplane was being operated as a visual flight rules (VFR) cross-country personal flight, when the accident occurred. The airplane was operated by the pilot. The private certificated pilot received serious injuries. One passenger received minor injuries, and a second passenger was not injured. Instrument meteorological conditions prevailed in the area of the accident. The flight originated at the Grayling Airport, Grayling, Alaska, about 1300.

During a telephone conversation with the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigator-in-charge (IIC), on February 7, 2001, the pilot reported that when he departed Grayling, he set his altimeter to the field elevation of 100 feet. After departure, the pilot said the weather conditions included broken clouds at 2,000 feet, with a visibility of 3 miles. As the flight progressed southbound, the pilot said he encountered fog. He began a descent to maintain visual contact with the ground. With the airplane's altimeter indicating 400 feet, the airplane suddenly collided with terrain on the Yukon River. The airplane received damage to the wings, fuselage, and landing gear.

The closest official weather observation station is Anvik, Alaska. On February 6, 2001, at 1415, an automated weather observation system (AWOS) was reporting in part: Wind, 270 degrees (true) at 4 knots; visibility, 1.25 statute miles; clouds and sky condition, 100 feet overcast; temperature, 21 degrees F; dew point, 16 degrees F; altimeter, 30.05 inHg.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	60, 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-w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	May 16, 2000
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	September 19, 1999
Flight Time:	1500 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1200 hours (Total, this make and model)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N3334M
Model/Series:	PA-12	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	12-2192
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel; Ski	Seats:	3
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	September 19, 1999 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1750 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	150 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	2015 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	O-235
Registered Owner:	Carl A. Walker	Rated Power:	115 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument (IMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	PANV,309 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	7 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	14:15 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	335°
Lowest Cloud Condition:		Visibility	1.25 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 100 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	4 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	250°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.04 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	-6°C / -9°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	N/A - None - Fog		
Departure Point:	Grayling, AK (KGX)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Holy Cross, AK (4Z4)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	13:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Minor, 1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious, 1 Minor, 1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	62.466667,-160.116668

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Erickson, Scott
Additional Participating Persons:	PATRICK LEONARD; FAA-AL-ANC-FSDO 03; ANCHORAGE, AK
Original Publish Date:	September 6, 2001
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	The NTSB traveled to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=51457

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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](#).