



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

<b>Location:</b>	Willow, Alaska	<b>Accident Number:</b>	ANC01LA079
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	July 2, 2001, 06:45 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N4989A
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Cessna 180	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Destroyed
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	1 None
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

## Analysis

The certificated private pilot stated that about 15 minutes after departure, while in level, cruise flight, the engine began to run rough, so he elected to make a precautionary landing on a remote lake. After landing, while taxiing to shore, flames erupted from under the engine cowling, and quickly spread throughout the cabin of the airplane. The pilot was unable to bring the fire under control, and was eventually forced to abandon the airplane, and swim to shore. An FAA inspector examined the airplane at the accident scene, and reported that the fire totally consumed the main fuselage, engine nacelle, and both inboard portions of the wings. He added that the engine eventually fell into the water, but was later recovered. The inspector reported that due to the substantial amount of fire damage, he was not able to discern the origin of the fire.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: A fire of undetermined origin, following a precautionary landing.

## Findings

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

Findings

1. PRECAUTIONARY LANDING - PERFORMED - PILOT IN COMMAND

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Occurrence #2: FIRE

Phase of Operation: TAXI - FROM LANDING

Findings

2. (C) REASON FOR OCCURRENCE UNDETERMINED

## Factual Information

On July 2, 2001, about 0645 Alaska daylight time, a float-equipped Cessna 180 airplane, N4989A, was destroyed by fire following a precautionary landing at a remote lake located about 2 miles north of Houston, Alaska. The airplane was being operated as a visual flight rules (VFR) personal flight under Title 14, CFR Part 91, when the accident occurred. The solo certificated private pilot was not injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and no flight plan was filed. The flight originated at Willow Lake, Willow, Alaska, about 0630.

During a telephone conversation with the National Transportation Safety Board investigator-in-charge on July 2, the pilot stated that about 15 minutes after departure, while in level, cruise flight, the engine began to run rough. He said that he elected to make a precautionary landing on a remote lake to investigate the engine problem. After an uneventful landing and while taxiing to shore, flames erupted from under the engine cowling, and quickly spread throughout the cabin of the airplane. The pilot was unable to bring the fire under control, and was eventually forced to abandon the airplane, and swim to shore.

A Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) airworthiness inspector, Anchorage Flight Standards District Office, examined the airplane at the accident scene on July 5. The FAA inspector reported that the fire totally consumed the main fuselage, engine nacelle, and both inboard portions of the wings. He added that the engine eventually fell into the water, but was later recovered by the insurance adjuster during the recovery efforts. The inspector reported that due to the substantial amount of fire damage, he was not able to discern the origin of the fire.

The pilot did not submit a Pilot/Operator report (NTSB form 6120.1/20).

### Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Private	<b>Age:</b>	50, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine land; Single-engine sea	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Left
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	No
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 3 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	July 27, 1999
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	UNK	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	
<b>Flight Time:</b>	1000 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Cessna	<b>Registration:</b>	N4989A
<b>Model/Series:</b>	180	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Airplane
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	32386
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Float	<b>Seats:</b>	4
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	Unknown	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	2800 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>		<b>Engines:</b>	1 Reciprocating
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>		<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Lycoming
<b>ELT:</b>		<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	O-470
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	Philip D. Horton	<b>Rated Power:</b>	230 Horsepower
<b>Operator:</b>		<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual (VMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>		<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	
<b>Observation Time:</b>		<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Clear	<b>Visibility</b>	50 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>		<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	10 knots /	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Wind Direction:</b>	90°	<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>		<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	Willow , AK (UUO )	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	None
<b>Destination:</b>	Wasilla, AK (WAS )	<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>	06:30 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class E

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 None	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Destroyed
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>		<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	1 None	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	61.757499,-150.05278

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Johnson, Clinton
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	Craig A Johnson ; Federal Aviation Administration ; Anchorage , AK
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	June 3, 2002
<b>Last Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Investigation Class:</b>	<a href="#">Class</a>
<b>Note:</b>	The NTSB traveled to the scene of this accident.
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	<a href="https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=52630">https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=52630</a>

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](#).