



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

<b>Location:</b>	PORT ALSWORTH, Alaska	<b>Accident Number:</b>	ANC02LA003
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	October 5, 2001, 10:30 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N1966U
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Cessna 185	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	1 Minor
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

## Analysis

The commercial certificated pilot was landing a float-equipped airplane on the surface of a remote lake. The water surface was smooth and glassy. The pilot said he touched down too fast, and the airplane nosed over. The pilot, who was wearing an inflatable jacket, exited the inverted airplane and got onto the floats. The airplane sank in about two minutes. The pilot then swam for about 40 minutes to the shore. The pilot said the airplane is resting in about 250 feet of water, and has not been recovered.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's excessive descent rate and subsequent hard landing during the landing flare/touchdown. A factor in the accident was glassy water conditions.

### Findings

Occurrence #1: HARD LANDING  
Phase of Operation: LANDING - FLARE/TOUCHDOWN

- Findings
1. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - WATER, GLASSY
  2. (C) PROPER DESCENT RATE - EXCESSIVE - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #2: NOSE OVER  
Phase of Operation: LANDING - FLARE/TOUCHDOWN

## Factual Information

On October 5, 2001, about 1030 Alaska daylight time, a float-equipped Cessna 185 airplane, N1966U, sustained substantial damage when it collided with the surface of Lake Clark, about 18 miles northeast of Port Alsworth, 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 commercial certificated pilot, the sole occupant, received minor injuries. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed. The flight originated from Miller Creek on Lake Clark, about 1020.

During a telephone conversation with the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigator-in-charge (IIC), on October 18, 2001, the pilot reported he just departed his cabin on Lake Clark, and was flying over the lake toward Anchorage. The pilot said the surface of the lake was smooth and glassy, and he decided to conduct some landings on Lake Clark. He said that during the landing approach, he did not have any shore reference and misjudged the water surface. The pilot said he inadvertently touched down too fast, and the airplane nosed over in the water. The pilot, who was wearing an inflatable jacket, exited the inverted airplane and got onto the floats. The airplane sank in about two minutes. The pilot then swam for about 40 minutes to the shore. The pilot said the airplane is resting in about 250 feet of water, and has not been recovered.

### Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Commercial	<b>Age:</b>	40, 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 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	April 10, 2000
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	UNK	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	May 30, 2000
<b>Flight Time:</b>	1300 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1200 hours (Total, this make and model), 1200 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 100 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 10 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Cessna	<b>Registration:</b>	N1966U
<b>Model/Series:</b>	185	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Airplane
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	18501689
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Float	<b>Seats:</b>	4
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	June 30, 2001 Annual	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	3350 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>	120 Hrs	<b>Engines:</b>	1 Reciprocating
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	2700 Hrs at time of accident	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	CONTINENTAL
<b>ELT:</b>	Installed, not activated	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	IO-520-D
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	DAVID E. McRAE	<b>Rated Power:</b>	300 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>		<b>Visibility</b>	10 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	Overcast / 3000 ft AGL	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	/	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Wind Direction:</b>		<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>		<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	9°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	PORT ALSWORTH, AK	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	None
<b>Destination:</b>	ANCHORAGE, AK (PALH)	<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>	10:20 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class G

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 Minor	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>		<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	1 Minor	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	60.383335,-153.858337

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	ERICKSON, SCOTT
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	LARRY PETERSON; FAA-AL-ANC FSDO 03; ANCHORAGE, AK
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	July 2, 2002
<b>Last Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Investigation Class:</b>	<a href="#">Class</a>
<b>Note:</b>	
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	<a href="https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=53645">https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=53645</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](#).