



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	MERRILL PASS, Alaska	Accident Number:	ANC91LA091
Date & Time:	July 6, 1991, 14:00 Local	Registration:	N121EF
Aircraft:	PIPER PA-12	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	3 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

AFTER A THIRD LOW APPROACH OVER AN INTENDED LANDING AREA ON A GRAVEL BAR, THE PILOT ENCOUNTERED TURBULENCE DURING THE CLIMB. HE TURNED DOWNWIND, AT WHICH TIME THE AIRPLANE STALLED AND SPUN INTO THE TREES.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THAT THE PILOT FAILED TO MAINTAIN AN AIRSPEED ABOVE STALL SPEED. CONTRIBUTING TO THE ACCIDENT WAS THE TURBULENCE.

Findings

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

Findings

- 1. WEATHER CONDITION - TURBULENCE

Occurrence #2: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: CLIMB

Findings

- 2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - TURBULENCE
- 3. (C) STALL/SPIN - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	32, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Single-engine sea	Seat Occupied:	Front
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 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	September 13, 1990
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	1096 hours (Total, all aircraft), 750 hours (Total, this make and model), 40 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 30 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	PIPER	Registration:	N121EF
Model/Series:	PA-12 PA-12	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	12-2447
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	3
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	August 12, 1990 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1925 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	80 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	2700 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	O-320-B2A
Registered Owner:	PATRICIA A. MCGUIRE	Rated Power:	160 Horsepower
Operator:	PAUL F. ERICKSON	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:	Scattered	Visibility	20 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	9 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	360°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	ANCHORAGE , AK (LHD)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	11:30 Local	Type of Airspace:	

Airport Information

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	Gravel
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	Dry;Rough
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	Full stop

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	2 Serious	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	3 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	61.220863,-149.850387(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Daw, Roy
Additional Participating Persons:	MICHAEL DOLSON; ANCHORAGE , AK
Original Publish Date:	March 24, 1993
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=5573

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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](#).