



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	ANCHOR POINT, Alaska	Accident Number:	ANC03LA067
Date & Time:	June 25, 2003, 15:50 Local	Registration:	N91303
Aircraft:	Cessna 180	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	3 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 135: Air taxi & commuter - Non-scheduled		

Analysis

The single engine, tundra tire-equipped airplane departed a remote wilderness lodge, located about 100 miles from the intended destination, on an on-demand air taxi flight with an airline transport certificated pilot and two passengers on board. A portion of the flight was over open ocean water. The airplane did not arrive at its destination, and no wreckage has been located. A fatally injured passenger was located in the ocean, 8 days after the airplane was reported overdue. The pilot and the remaining passenger were not located, and are presumed to have received fatal injuries. The airplane is presumed to have collided with ocean waters.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: An in-flight collision with water for an undetermined reason.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: UNKNOWN

Findings

1. TERRAIN CONDITION - WATER
2. (C) REASON FOR OCCURRENCE UNDETERMINED

Factual Information

HISTORY OF FLIGHT

On June 25, 2003, at an estimated time of 1550 Alaska daylight time, a single engine, tundra tire-equipped Cessna 180 airplane, N91303, is presumed to have collided with the ocean waters of the Cook Inlet, about 7 miles southwest of Anchor Point, Alaska. No wreckage has been located, and the airplane is presumed to be destroyed. A fatally injured passenger was located on July 3, in ocean waters near Anchor Point. The airline transport certificated pilot, and the remaining passenger, were not located and are presumed to have received fatal injuries. The airplane was being operated as a visual flight rules (VFR) on-demand passenger flight under Title 14, CFR Part 135, when the accident occurred. The airplane was operated by Hallo Bay Air Inc., Palmer, Alaska. The accident flight originated from Hallo Bay, located on the eastern shore of the Alaska Peninsula, about 1430, for a flight to Homer, Alaska, located on the Kenai Peninsula. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at Hallo Bay and at Homer. A VFR flight plan was filed, with an expected time of arrival in Homer of 1600.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reported that earlier in the day, the pilot departed Homer and opened his flight plan at 1217 for a round-robin flight to the Hallo Bay Wilderness Camp, located within the Katmai National Park, about 100 miles south-southwest of Homer. The camp is located about 63 miles west-northwest of Kodiak, Alaska. On the pilot's flight plan, he indicated the expected route for the return flight was Hallo Bay, Cape Douglas, Augustine Island, Anchor Point, and then Homer. The airplane was observed to depart Hallo Bay for the return flight. The airplane did not arrive in Homer, and the FAA declared the flight overdue on June 25, at 1802. During search operations, search personnel learned the pilot verbally indicated to another pilot at Hallo Bay, a possible return route of Hallo Bay, Cape Douglas, Barren Islands, the lower end of the Kenai Peninsula, and then to Homer.

The Barren Islands are about 27 miles east-northeast of Cape Douglas. The southern end of the Kenai Peninsula is about 13 miles north-northeast of the Barren Islands.

No wreckage was located and the search was suspended on July 2, 2003. A fishing vessel spotted the passenger in the water on July 3. The passenger was not wearing a personal floatation device. No other debris was found.

PERSONNEL INFORMATION

Pilot Information

The pilot held an airline transport pilot certificate with an airplane multiengine rating, a flight engineer certificate with a jet rating, commercial pilot privileges with airplane single-engine

land, and airplane single-engine sea ratings, and airplane type ratings in B-727, B-747, and DC-10 airplanes. In addition, the pilot held a flight instructor certificate with an airplane single-engine rating.

The pilot's previous first-class medical certificate was issued on November 29, 2001. In November 2002, the pilot was treated for coronary artery disease, and underwent surgery for a single vessel coronary artery bypass grafting.

In the application for the pilot's most recent medical certificate, dated May 1, 2003, the pilot reported his treatment for coronary artery disease and surgery to the FAA's Alaska Regional Flight Surgeon. After a review of the pilot's medical information, the flight surgeon subsequently issued the pilot a second-class medical certificate on May 1, 2003, with a limitation that the pilot must wear lenses for distant vision, and possess glasses for near vision. In addition, the pilot's medical certificate had a restriction stating his certificate was not valid after July 31, 2003.

No personal flight records were located for the pilot. On the pilot's application for medical certificate, dated May 1, 2003, the pilot indicated that his total aeronautical experience consisted of about 35,000 hours, of which 18 were accrued in the previous 6 months.

Company Information

The pilot held a single-pilot air taxi certificate. His primary flight operations were conducted between Homer and Hallo Bay Wilderness Lodge.

AIRCRAFT INFORMATION

Examination of the maintenance records revealed that the most recent annual inspection was accomplished on January 16, 2003. At that time, the airplane had accrued 3,464.3 hours, with a tachometer reading of 292.0.

On July 6, 1998, a zero-time, rebuilt IO-520F engine was modified to a Texas Skyways O-520F/TS configuration by the installation of a carburetor, and then installed in the airplane. At that time, the airplane had accrued 3,171.37 hours, with a tachometer reading of zero. On May 9, 2003, with a tachometer reading of 294.14, the engine was again modified by removal of the carburetor and installation of a Bendix fuel injection system. The most recent maintenance record entry for the engine was an oil change at a tachometer reading of 340.53. The date was not specified.

METEOROLOGICAL INFORMATION

An area forecast was issued on June 25, at 1145, for the southern half of Alaska, including the Cook Inlet and Susitna Valley, and for Kodiak, Alaska. The forecast, valid until 2400, stated, in part: Airmet for mountain obscuration, valid until 1800; Alaska Range obscured in clouds and

precipitation, no change. ...Elsewhere, 5,000 feet scattered, 7,000 feet overcast, tops at 15,000 feet, layered above to 34,000 feet. Occasionally, 5,000 feet broken, 7,000 feet overcast in light rain showers. Surface wind from the southeast with gusts to 20 knots. Through Turnigan Arm, surface wind from the east at 20 knots with gusts to 35 knots. Outlook, valid from 2400 to 1800 on June 26, VFR in rain showers. ...Turbulence, none significant. Icing and freezing level, light isolated moderate rime icing in clouds between 5,000 to 15,000 feet. Freezing level, 5,000 feet.

The forecast for Kodiak, stated in part: Airmet for mountain obscuration, valid until 1800; Mountains obscured in clouds and in precipitation, no change. 1,500 feet scattered, 3,500 feet broken, tops at 12,000 feet, layered above to 25,000 feet in light rain. Occasionally, 1,500 feet broken, 3,500 feet overcast. Visibility, 3 statute miles in light rain and mist. Surface wind from the southeast at 20 knots. East side of Kodiak, isolated ceilings below 1,000 feet with visibilities below 3 statute miles in light rain and mist. Outlook, valid from 2400 to 1800 on June 26, marginal VFR with ceilings due to rain. Turbulence, none significant. Icing and freezing level, none significant. Freezing level, 4,000 feet.

The closest official weather observation station is Homer, Alaska, which is located 19 nautical miles east of the presumed accident site. At 1553, an Aviation Routine Weather Report (METAR) was reporting in part: Wind, 140 degrees (true) at 6 knots; visibility, 10 statute miles; clouds and sky condition, 8,500 feet broken; temperature, 55 degrees F; dew point, 43 degrees F; altimeter, 29.85 inHg.

COMMUNICATIONS

After his departure from Hallo Bay, there were no reports of communication between the pilot and any FAA facility, nor with any other aircraft. The pilot was reported to have carried a cellular phone, and a satellite phone.

MEDICAL AND PATHOLOGICAL INFORMATION

A postmortem examination of the passenger was conducted under the authority of the Alaska State Medical Examiner, 4500 South Boniface Parkway, Anchorage, Alaska, on July 8, 2003. The examination revealed that the cause of death for the passenger was attributed to drowning.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

No communications were received from the airplane, and no emergency locator transmitter signals were detected. Extensive search operations were conducted along the anticipated route of flight. Numerous other routes of potential travel were extensively searched, both over land and water. Search personnel, under the coordination of the 11th Rescue Coordination Center, flew 195 hours. Approximately 100 hours of additional search effort was conducted by volunteers, friends, and family of the pilot.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Federal Aviation Regulation (FAR) 135.183, Performance Requirements: Land aircraft operated over water, states, in part: No person may operate a land aircraft carrying passengers over water unless - (a) It is operated at an altitude that allows it to reach land in the case of engine failure. (b) It is necessary for takeoff or landing.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline transport; Commercial; Flight engineer; Flight instructor	Age:	62, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Single-engine sea; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane single-engine	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	May 1, 2003
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	35000 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Cessna	Registration:	N91303
Model/Series:	180	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	18052039
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	January 16, 2003 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3190 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	3464 Hrs as of last inspection	Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	IO-520F
Registered Owner:	DEBORAH NOVAK	Rated Power:	285 Horsepower
Operator:	HALLO BAY AIR INC.	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	On-demand air taxi (135)
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	K3YC

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	PAHO,84 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	19 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	15:53 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	90°
Lowest Cloud Condition:		Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 8500 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	6 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	118°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.85 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	13°C / 6°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	HALLO BAY, AK	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	VFR
Destination:	HOMER, AK (PAHO)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	14:30 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	2 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	
Total Injuries:	3 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	59.765277,-152.050827

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Erickson, Scott
Additional Participating Persons:	DICK BUZBY; FAA-AL-ANC FSDO 03; ANCHORAGE, AK
Original Publish Date:	September 1, 2004
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=57404

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](#).