



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Fruitland, Utah	Accident Number:	SEA07LA018
Date & Time:	November 15, 2006, 13:10 Local	Registration:	N85HY
Aircraft:	Aviat A-1B	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

Because he was wearing a life vest during the flight, the pilot's back began to ache, so he decided to land on a nearby snow-covered road to rest. After selecting the road, the pilot made three low passes over the road, each time rolling the aircraft's wheels along the surface to judge the depth and softness of the snow. After reaching the conclusion that the snow was about six inches deep, and soft enough for landing, the pilot attempted a full-stop landing on the tracks made during the previous passes. During the landing roll the aircraft broke through a crusted layer of snow, whereupon its wheels penetrated the snow to about 18 inches. As the aircraft broke through the crust layer, the pilot started to add power in an attempt to go around, but the main wheels dug into the snow, and the aircraft nosed over onto its back. In a post-accident telephone interview, the pilot stated that he had radio contact with individuals on the ground who could have reached the area he chose to land at in less than five minutes. He further stated that after the accident he realized that it would have been wise for him to ask those individuals to check the snow depth at the landing site before he tried to land there.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's improper in-flight decision to land on snow covered terrain. Deep snow on the terrain that the pilot chose to land on was a factor in this accident.

Findings

Occurrence #1: NOSE OVER

Phase of Operation: LANDING - ROLL

Findings

1. (C) IN-FLIGHT PLANNING/DECISION - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - SNOW COVERED

Factual Information

On November 15, 2006, approximately 1310 mountain standard time, an Aviat Husky A-1B, N85HY, nosed over during a landing on a snow-covered road about 15 miles west of Fruitland, Utah. The airline transport pilot and his passenger were not injured, but the aircraft, which is owned and operated by Commander Funk, LLC., sustained substantial damage. The 14 CFR Part 91 volunteer aerial search/observation flight, which departed Heber, Utah, about two hours and forty minutes prior to the accident, was being operated in visual meteorological conditions. There was no report of an ELT activation.

According to the pilot, because he was flying over Strawberry Reservoir while searching for the bodies of two drowning victims, he was wearing a life vest that forced him to sit in an awkward position while flying. Because of the position he was sitting in, the pilot's back began to ache, so he decided to land on a nearby snow-covered road in order to rest and have something to eat. After selecting the road, the pilot made three low passes over the road, each time rolling the aircraft's wheels along the surface to judge the depth and softness of the snow. After reaching the conclusion that the snow was about six inches deep, and soft enough for landing, the pilot made a fourth approach, intended to be a full-stop. He then touched down in the tracks he had made on the other three runs. Although the touchdown was uneventful, after the aircraft had rolled about 150 feet, it broke through a crusted layer of snow about six inches below the surface, and sank to the snows full depth, which was later determined to be about 18 inches. As the aircraft broke through the crust layer, the pilot started to add power in an attempt to go around, but the main wheels dug into the snow, and the aircraft nosed over onto its back.

In a post-accident telephone interview, the pilot stated that he had radio contact with individuals on the ground who could have reached the area he chose to land at in less than five minutes. He further stated that after the accident he realized that it would have been wise for him to ask those individuals to check the snow depth at the landing site before he tried to land there.

The pilot did not submit the National Transportation Safety Board Pilot/Operator Aircraft Accident Report, Form 6120.1/2.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline transport; Flight instructor	Age:	32, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane multi-engine; Airplane single-engine; Instrument airplane	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	August 1, 2005
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	4000 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Aviat	Registration:	N85HY
Model/Series:	A-1B	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	2185
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:		Certified Max Gross Wt.:	
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-360-A1P
Registered Owner:	Commander Funk, LLC.	Rated Power:	180 Horsepower
Operator:	Brian Rowser	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

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:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	4°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Heber, UT (36U)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Fruitland, UT	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	10:30 Local	Type of Airspace:	

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	40.185276,-111.1875

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Anderson, Orrin
Additional Participating Persons:	Lewis Olson; Salt Lake City FSDO; Salt Lake City, UT
Original Publish Date:	May 29, 2007
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=64877

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](#).