



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Sutton, Alaska	Accident Number:	ANC09CA060
Date & Time:	July 6, 2009, 17:00 Local	Registration:	N29785
Aircraft:	Bellanca 8GCBC	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Loss of control in flight	Injuries:	1 Serious, 1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The private pilot made a personal cross-country flight under Title 14, CFR Part 91 in mountainous terrain. He said that as the airplane passed near an area of steep terrain, he encountered a strong downdraft, and the airplane began to descend. He added full engine power to stop the descent, but the airplane continued to descend, and it impacted an area of down sloping tundra-covered terrain. The airplane sustained substantial damage to the fuselage, wings, and empennage. He characterized wind on the ground as light and variable, but reported encountering stronger winds just before the accident. The pilot indicated that there were no preaccident mechanical problems with the airplane, and noted in his report to the NTSB that the accident might have been avoided if he had been flying at a higher altitude, which would have provided more altitude for a recovery.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's failure to maintain control of the airplane after an in-flight encounter with a downdraft in mountainous terrain, and his decision to fly at an altitude where such an encounter made a successful recovery unlikely.

Findings

Environmental issues	Downdraft - Contributed to outcome
Personnel issues	Decision making/judgment - Pilot
Aircraft	Climb capability - Capability exceeded
Environmental issues	Downdraft - Ability to respond/compensate

Factual Information

History of Flight

Enroute	Other weather encounter
Enroute	Loss of control in flight (Defining event)
Uncontrolled descent	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	51, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	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 3 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	June 26, 2009
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	June 20, 2008
Flight Time:	361 hours (Total, all aircraft), 238 hours (Total, this make and model), 327 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 24 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Bellanca	Registration:	N29785
Model/Series:	8GCBC	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	355-80
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	June 17, 2009 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	
Time Since Last Inspection:	24 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	1384 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	C91A installed, activated, aided in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	O-360-C1E
Registered Owner:	BARICKMAN WILL D	Rated Power:	180 Horsepower
Operator:	BARICKMAN WILL D	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:	15 knots / 20 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	18°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	Palmer, AK (PAAQ)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	VFR
Destination:	Palmer, AK (PAAQ)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:		Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	Palmer Municipal Airport PAAQ	Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:	242 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:		IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious, 1 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	62.021389,-148.138061(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Johnson, Clinton
Additional Participating Persons:	Bruce Olson; Sutton, AK
Original Publish Date:	September 30, 2009
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	This accident report documents the factual circumstances of this accident as described to the NTSB.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=74220

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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](#).