



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

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<b>Location:</b>	Ketchikan, Alaska	<b>Accident Number:</b>	ANC15MA041
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	June 25, 2015, 12:15 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N270PA
<b>Aircraft:</b>	DEHAVILLAND DHC-3	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>	Controlled flight into terr/obj (CFIT)	<b>Injuries:</b>	9 Fatal
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 135: Air taxi & commuter - Non-scheduled - Sightseeing		

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## Analysis

The Safety Board's full report is available at <http://www.nts.gov/investigations/AccidentReports/Pages/aviation.aspx>. The Aircraft Accident Report number is NTSB/AAR-17/02.

On June 25, 2015, about 1215 Alaska daylight time, a single-engine, turbine-powered, float-equipped de Havilland DHC-3 (Otter) airplane, N270PA, collided with mountainous, tree-covered terrain about 24 miles east-northeast of Ketchikan, Alaska. The commercial pilot and eight passengers sustained fatal injuries, and the airplane was destroyed. The airplane was owned by Pantechnicon Aviation, of Minden, Nevada, and operated by Promech Air, Inc., of Ketchikan. The flight was conducted under the provisions of 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 135 as an on-demand sightseeing flight; a company visual flight rules flight plan (by which the company performed its own flight-following) was in effect. Marginal visual flight rules conditions were reported in the area at the time of the accident. The flight departed about 1207 from Rudyerd Bay about 44 miles east-northeast of Ketchikan and was en route to the operator's base at the Ketchikan Harbor Seaplane Base, Ketchikan.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

- (1) the pilot's decision to continue visual flight into an area of instrument meteorological conditions, which resulted in his geographic disorientation and controlled flight into terrain; and
- (2) Promech's company culture, which tacitly endorsed flying in hazardous weather and failed to manage the risks associated with the competitive pressures affecting Ketchikan-area air tour operators; its lack of a formal safety program; and its inadequate operational control of flight releases.

## Findings

<b>Personnel issues</b>	Decision making/judgment - Pilot
<b>Personnel issues</b>	Geographic disorient (lost) - Pilot
<b>Organizational issues</b>	Safety - Operator
<b>Organizational issues</b>	Pressures/demands - Operator
<b>Organizational issues</b>	Standard operating practices - Operator
<b>Organizational issues</b>	Oversight of operation - Operator
<b>Environmental issues</b>	(general) - Decision related to condition
<b>Aircraft</b>	Ground proximity system - Design
<b>Aircraft</b>	(general) - Design

## Factual Information

### History of Flight

<b>Enroute-cruise</b>	Controlled flight into terr/obj (CFIT) (Defining event)
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### Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Commercial	<b>Age:</b>	64
<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>	3-point
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	Airplane	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	Yes
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 2 Without waivers/limitations	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	March 23, 2015
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	Yes	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	
<b>Flight Time:</b>	3912 hours (Total, all aircraft), 37 hours (Total, this make and model), 3912 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 153 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 91 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 3 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	DEHAVILLAND	<b>Registration:</b>	N270PA
<b>Model/Series:</b>	DHC-3	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Airplane
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>	1958	<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	270
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Float	<b>Seats:</b>	
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	June 10, 2015 AAIP	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>		<b>Engines:</b>	1 Turbo prop
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	24439.5 Hrs at time of accident	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	
<b>ELT:</b>	C91A installed, activated, aided in locating accident	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	PANTECHNICON AVIATION LTD	<b>Rated Power:</b>	
<b>Operator:</b>	Promech Air, Inc.	<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	On-demand air taxi (135)
<b>Operator Does Business As:</b>		<b>Operator Designator Code:</b>	Q5IA

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual (VMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	KTN,92 ft msl	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	24 Nautical Miles
<b>Observation Time:</b>	19:53 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	71°
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Few / 800 ft AGL	<b>Visibility</b>	6 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	Broken / 1200 ft AGL	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	15 knots / 23 knots	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Wind Direction:</b>	130°	<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	29.9 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	16°C / 14°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	Moderate - None - Rain		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	Ketchikan, AK	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	Company VFR
<b>Destination:</b>	Ketchikan, AK	<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>		<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class G

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>	8 Fatal	<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	9 Fatal	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	55.45639,-131.146118(est)

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Banning, David
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	Patrick Hempen; Federal Aviation Administration; Washington, DC Karen Reich; Holland America Group; CA Les Doud; Hartzell Propeller Marcus Sessoms; Promech Air; FL Clark Hassell; Promech Air; Ketchikan, AK Robert DuRall; Genesys Aerosystems; TX Bob Grace; Promech Air; Ketchikan , AK
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	May 17, 2017
<b>Last Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Investigation Class:</b>	<a href="#">Class 1</a>
<b>Note:</b>	The NTSB traveled to the scene of this accident.
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	<a href="https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=91435">https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=91435</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](#).