



# National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

<b>Location:</b>	HAINES, AK	<b>Accident Number:</b>	ANC96FA137
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	09/01/1996, 1756 AKD	<b>Registration:</b>	N2181Z
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Piper PA-32	<b>Injuries:</b>	4 Serious, 2 Minor
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 135: Air Taxi & Commuter - Non-scheduled - Sightseeing		

## Analysis

The air taxi pilot initiated flight over an extensive field of glaciers. The passengers described a gray, overcast sky, with a snow field below and snow on the surrounding mountains. They estimated the cruise altitude was between 100 and 500 feet above the glacier. The flight encountered a fog bank in the direction of travel; before reaching the fog, the pilot elected to turn around. During the turn, the airplane descended and collided with the glacier. Postaccident inspection disclosed no evidence of any preexisting mechanical anomaly with the airplane.

## Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the pilot's inadvertent flight into instrument meteorological conditions (IMC) failure to maintain adequate altitude/clearance from terrain, while maneuvering to reverse the direction of flight. Factors associated with the accident were: the pilot's inadequate weather evaluation; and the terrain and weather, which resulted in a whiteout condition.

## Findings

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

### Findings

1. (F) WEATHER EVALUATION - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
  2. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - MOUNTAINOUS/HILLY
  3. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - SNOW COVERED
  4. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - FOG
  5. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - WHITEOUT
  6. (C) VFR FLIGHT INTO IMC - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER  
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING - TURN TO REVERSE DIRECTION

### Findings

7. (C) ALTITUDE/CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

## Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Commercial	<b>Age:</b>	25
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	Airplane
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None
<b>Flight Time:</b>	930 hours (Total, all aircraft), 239 hours (Total, this make and model), 291 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 93 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Piper	<b>Registration:</b>	N2181Z
<b>Model/Series:</b>	PA-32 PA-32	<b>Engines:</b>	1 Reciprocating
<b>Operator:</b>	LAB FLYING SERVICE	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Lycoming
<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	Commuter Air Carrier (135); On-demand Air Taxi (135)	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	IO-540-K165
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 135: Air Taxi & Commuter - Non-scheduled - Sightseeing		

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Unknown	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	PAH, 16 ft msl	<b>Weather Information Source:</b>	Weather Observation Facility
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	Overcast / 4500 ft agl	<b>Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:</b>	7 knots / , 30°
<b>Temperature:</b>	12° C	<b>Visibility</b>	0 Miles
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>			
<b>Departure Point:</b>	GUSTAVUS, AK (GST)	<b>Destination:</b>	, AK (HNS)

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 Serious	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>	3 Serious, 2 Minor	<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>			

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	JAMES D LABELLE	<b>Adopted Date:</b>	12/15/1997
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	NTSB accident and incident dockets serve as permanent archival information for the NTSB's investigations. Dockets released prior to June 1, 2009 are publicly available from the NTSB's Record Management Division at <a href="mailto:pubinq@ntsb.gov">pubinq@ntsb.gov</a> , or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at <a href="http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/">http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/</a> .		

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