



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

Location:	PALMER, AK	Accident Number:	ANC97FA002
Date & Time:	10/02/1996, 1224 AKD	Registration:	N64RS
Aircraft:	Piper PA-18	Injuries:	1 Fatal, 1 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot was departing his 700 feet long grass strip in a tundra-tire/tail-wheel equipped airplane to transport a passenger to a hunting area. The airplane climbed to about 100 feet above the ground while in a slight right turn. The pilot described the airplane's tail as suddenly being pushed downward by a gust of wind. The airplane then descended in a right wing and nose low attitude toward the ground, through two strands of high voltage electrical wires. The pilot recalled seeing sparks emanating from the right wingtip. The airplane struck the ground in a small grove of trees 2/10 of a mile from the departure end of the runway, and a postcrash fire erupted. No mechanical malfunction of the engine was found. The pilot reported the wind conditions as light and variable. Wind conditions from an airport 1/2 mile northeast of the accident site, one half hour before the accident, were reported as 9 knots. One half hour after the accident, the wind conditions were 15 knots with gusts to 32 knots. Local residents reported strong gusty winds throughout the area. No evidence was found that the pilot had obtained an official weather briefing.

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the pilot's inadequate compensation for wind conditions and failure to maintain adequate airspeed, which resulted in an inadvertent stall. The unfavorable wind condition was a related factor.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - INITIAL CLIMB

Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - UNFAVORABLE WIND
2. (C) COMPENSATION FOR WIND CONDITIONS - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (C) AIRSPEED - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (C) STALL - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

5. OBJECT - WIRE, TRANSMISSION
6. OBJECT - TREE(S)

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

7. TERRAIN CONDITION - GROUND

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	61
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land	Instrument Rating(s):	None
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Instructor Rating(s):	None
Flight Time:	2441 hours (Total, all aircraft), 2140 hours (Total, this make and model), 36 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 20 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N64RS
Model/Series:	PA-18 PA-18	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Operator:	FREMONT L. HOTCHKISS	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None	Engine Model/Series:	O-320-A2B
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	PAA, 232 ft msl	Weather Information Source:	Weather Observation Facility
Lowest Ceiling:	None / 0 ft agl	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	9 knots / , 145°
Temperature:	5° C	Visibility	40 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:		Destination:	GEORGE GLACIER, AK

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	On-Ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Latitude, Longitude:			

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): SCOTT R ERICKSON Adopted Date: 03/31/1998

Investigation Docket: 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 pubinq@ntsb.gov, or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at <http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/>.

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