



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

Location:	SKWENTNA, AK	Accident Number:	ANC97LA025
Date & Time:	02/01/1997, 1427 AST	Registration:	N7235D
Aircraft:	Piper PA-22	Injuries:	3 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The noninstrument-rated private pilot and two passengers were on a cross country flight on top of an overcast at 10,000 feet msl when the pilot radioed FAA air traffic controllers for assistance. The pilot told controllers he thought he was a few miles from Anchorage, Alaska, his intended destination, but he was actually about 124 miles northwest of Anchorage. The pilot was asked if he could turn towards and cross a nearby mountain range to reach VFR conditions. He indicated he did not have enough fuel left, and that he was presently flying through the tops of the overcast. During his communications with the controllers, the pilot noted a marked disparity between his wet compass and his gyro driven heading indicator; he also said his only electronic navigation instrument aboard, a loran, was not reliable. Radio contact was lost with the pilot, and soon thereafter, an ELT was heard. The airplane was discovered crashed in a near vertical position on a glacier. Postaccident inspection disclosed no mechanical anomalies with the airplane and a functional loran. About five to six gallons of fuel was remaining in the left wing fuel tank.

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's continued VFR flight into instrument meteorological conditions, and subsequent failure to maintain control of the airplane. Factors associated with the accident are the pilot's inadequate weather evaluation, his becoming lost/disoriented, and spatial disorientation.

Findings

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

Findings

1. WEATHER CONDITION - CLOUDS
 2. (F) WEATHER EVALUATION - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
 3. (F) BECAME LOST/DISORIENTED - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #2: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

Findings

4. (C) VFR FLIGHT INTO IMC - CONTINUED - PILOT IN COMMAND
 5. (C) AIRCRAFT CONTROL - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
 6. (F) SPATIAL DISORIENTATION - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	27
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land	Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Instructor Rating(s):	None
Flight Time:	100 hours (Total, all aircraft), 20 hours (Total, this make and model), 80 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 3 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N7235D
Model/Series:	PA-22 PA-22	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Operator:	BRADLEY W. JOHNSON	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None	Engine Model/Series:	O-320-A1A
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	, 0 ft msl	Weather Information Source:	Pilot
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 10000 ft agl	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	/ ,
Temperature:		Visibility	0 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	PORT ALSWORTH, AK	Destination:	ANCHORAGE, AK (MRI)

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	2 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Latitude, Longitude:			

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): JAMES D LABELLE

Adopted Date: 05/04/1998

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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