



# National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

<b>Location:</b>	POINT LAY, AK	<b>Accident Number:</b>	ANC99LA014
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	12/03/1998, 1038 AST	<b>Registration:</b>	N3542H
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Piper PA-31	<b>Injuries:</b>	1 None
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General Aviation - Positioning		

## Analysis

A witness observed the airplane circle to land at the completion of an NDB approach. The nighttime meteorological conditions were an 800 feet ceiling, 1 mile visibility in blowing snow, and 26 knot winds. The surrounding terrain was essentially flat, snow covered, and featureless. The witness saw the airplane on final approach misaligned for the runway, and then disappear below an 18 feet msl bluff. He transmitted on the radio to 'get out of there,' and heard no response. About 10 minutes later the accident pilot walked up to the witness' airplane. The pilot told the investigator-in-charge that he was 'beat around by the winds, ...it was snowing pretty hard, I always had the lights, and I was concentrating on the runway. The next thing I knew I was on the ground short of the runway.' The pilot's previous experience to this airport was during daytime, and during visual conditions. The airport, which was being transferred from the Air Force to the North Slope Borough, has medium intensity runway lights (MIRL), and runway end identifier lights (REILS). It does not have visual approach slope indicator (VASI) lights.

## Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: Failure of the pilot to maintain a proper glidepath. Factors associated with this accident were the airport not having a VASI system installed, and the lack of visual perception for the pilot.

## Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER  
Phase of Operation: APPROACH - FAF/OUTER MARKER TO THRESHOLD (IFR)

### Findings

1. TERRAIN CONDITION - TUNDRA
2. WEATHER CONDITION - SNOW
3. WEATHER CONDITION - GUSTS
4. LIGHT CONDITION - DARK NIGHT

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER  
Phase of Operation: APPROACH - FAF/OUTER MARKER TO THRESHOLD (IFR)

### Findings

5. (C) PROPER GLIDEPATH - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
6. (F) VASI - NOT AVAILABLE - OTHER GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL
7. (F) VISUAL/AURAL PERCEPTION - PILOT IN COMMAND

## Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Airline Transport; Flight Instructor; Commercial	<b>Age:</b>	27
<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>	Airplane Single-engine; Instrument Airplane
<b>Flight Time:</b>	3069 hours (Total, all aircraft), 311 hours (Total, this make and model), 2556 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 298 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 88 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 5 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Piper	<b>Registration:</b>	N3542H
<b>Model/Series:</b>	PA-31 PA-31	<b>Engines:</b>	2 Reciprocating
<b>Operator:</b>	CAPE SMYTHE AIR SERVICE, INC.	<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>	LTIO-540-32B
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General Aviation - Positioning		

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Instrument Conditions	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Night/Dark
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	, 0 ft msl	<b>Weather Information Source:</b>	Witness
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	Overcast / 800 ft agl	<b>Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:</b>	26 knots / , 50°
<b>Temperature:</b>		<b>Visibility:</b>	1 Miles
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>			
<b>Departure Point:</b>	KOTZEBUE, AK (OTZ)	<b>Destination:</b>	(PIZ)

## Airport Information

<b>Airport:</b>	POINT LAY LRRS (PIZ)	<b>Runway Surface Type:</b>	Gravel
<b>Runway Used:</b>	5	<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	Snow--dry
<b>Runway Length/Width:</b>	3519 ft / 80 ft		

## Wreckage and Impact Information

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

## Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): MATTHEW L THOMAS

Adopted Date: 02/16/2001

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](mailto: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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