



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

Location:	KOTZEBUE, AK	Accident Number:	ANC00FA052
Date & Time:	05/01/2000, 0630 AKD	Registration:	N3935Z
Aircraft:	Piper PA-18	Injuries:	1 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot, the holder of an expired student pilot certificate, departed a remote village with a load of whale meat. The route of flight was along the coast of the Bering Sea, over snow-covered terrain, adjacent to snow-covered sea ice. The weather conditions along the route consisted of low ceilings with areas of fog and snow showers. The pilot did not file a flight plan. He was not reported overdue, and no ELT signal was received from the airplane. The wreckage was discovered by passing villagers about 3/4 mile inland from the coastline. The airplane collided with terrain and came to rest inverted. No preimpact mechanical malfunction was discovered. According to relatives, the pilot, who was not an aviation mechanic, maintained the airplane himself, and no maintenance records were located.

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 his failure to maintain control of the airplane due to spatial disorientation. Factors in the accident were weather conditions consisting of low ceilings, fog, a whiteout, and the pilot's lack of certification.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: CRUISE

Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - LOW CEILING
2. (C) VFR FLIGHT INTO IMC - CONTINUED - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) LACK OF CERTIFICATION - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - FOG
5. (C) AIRCRAFT CONTROL - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
6. (C) SPATIAL DISORIENTATION - PILOT IN COMMAND
7. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - WHITEOUT

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

8. TERRAIN CONDITION - SNOW COVERED

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Student	Age:	37
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Instrument Rating(s):	None
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Instructor Rating(s):	None
Flight Time:	600 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N3935Z
Model/Series:	PA-18 PA-18	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Operator:	GORDON W. ITO	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None	Engine Model/Series:	O-320-B2B
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:	Witness
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 100 ft agl	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	/ ,
Temperature:	-9°C	Visibility	5 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	KIVALINA, AK (KVL)	Destination:	KOTZEBUE, AK (PAOT)

Wreckage and Impact Information

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

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	SCOTT ERICKSON	Adopted Date:	07/10/2001
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 , or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/ .		

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