



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	Willow, AK	Accident Number:	ANC01LA079
Date & Time:	07/02/2001, 0645 AKD	Registration:	N4989A
Aircraft:	Cessna 180	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The certificated private pilot stated that about 15 minutes after departure, while in level, cruise flight, the engine began to run rough, so he elected to make a precautionary landing on a remote lake. After landing, while taxiing to shore, flames erupted from under the engine cowling, and quickly spread throughout the cabin of the airplane. The pilot was unable to bring the fire under control, and was eventually forced to abandon the airplane, and swim to shore. An FAA inspector examined the airplane at the accident scene, and reported that the fire totally consumed the main fuselage, engine nacelle, and both inboard portions of the wings. He added that the engine eventually fell into the water, but was later recovered. The inspector reported that due to the substantial amount of fire damage, he was not able to discern the origin of the fire.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: A fire of undetermined origin, following a precautionary landing.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER
Phase of Operation: CRUISE - NORMAL

Findings

1. PRECAUTIONARY LANDING - PERFORMED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: FIRE
Phase of Operation: TAXI - FROM LANDING

Findings

2. (C) REASON FOR OCCURRENCE UNDETERMINED

Factual Information

On July 2, 2001, about 0645 Alaska daylight time, a float-equipped Cessna 180 airplane, N4989A, was destroyed by fire following a precautionary landing at a remote lake located about 2 miles north of Houston, Alaska. The airplane was being operated as a visual flight rules (VFR) personal flight under Title 14, CFR Part 91, when the accident occurred. The solo certificated private pilot was not injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and no flight plan was filed. The flight originated at Willow Lake, Willow, Alaska, about 0630.

During a telephone conversation with the National Transportation Safety Board investigator-in-charge on July 2, the pilot stated that about 15 minutes after departure, while in level, cruise flight, the engine began to run rough. He said that he elected to make a precautionary landing on a remote lake to investigate the engine problem. After an uneventful landing and while taxiing to shore, flames erupted from under the engine cowling, and quickly spread throughout the cabin of the airplane. The pilot was unable to bring the fire under control, and was eventually forced to abandon the airplane, and swim to shore.

A Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) airworthiness inspector, Anchorage Flight Standards District Office, examined the airplane at the accident scene on July 5. The FAA inspector reported that the fire totally consumed the main fuselage, engine nacelle, and both inboard portions of the wings. He added that the engine eventually fell into the water, but was later recovered by the insurance adjuster during the recovery efforts. The inspector reported that due to the substantial amount of fire damage, he was not able to discern the origin of the fire.

The pilot did not submit a Pilot/Operator report (NTSB form 6120.1/20).

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	50, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land; Single-engine Sea	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt, Shoulder harness
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	07/27/1999
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	1000 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Cessna	Registration:	N4989A
Model/Series:	180	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	32386
Landing Gear Type:	Float	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Unknown	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2800 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	O-470
Registered Owner:	Philip D. Horton	Rated Power:	230 hp
Operator:	Philip D. Horton	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:		Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:		Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	50 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:		Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	10 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	90°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	Willow, AK (UUO)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Wasilla, AK (WAS)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	0630 ADT	Type of Airspace:	Class E

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	61.757500, -150.052778

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Clinton O Johnson **Report Date:** 06/03/2002

Additional Participating Persons: Craig A Johnson; Federal Aviation Administration; Anchorage, AK

Publish Date:

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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The Independent Safety Board Act, as codified at 49 U.S.C. Section 1154(b), precludes the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an incident or accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report. A factual report that may be admissible under 49 U.S.C. § 1154(b) is available [here](#).