



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	Chitina, AK	Accident Number:	ANC01LA080
Date & Time:	07/01/2001, 1500 AKD	Registration:	N5429D
Aircraft:	Beech H35	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The certificated private pilot said that the purpose of the flight was to show his friend some Alaskan scenery, in an area of mountainous, snow-covered terrain. As the flight progressed, the wind increased, and a strong downdraft caused the airplane to descend rapidly. The pilot applied full engine power in an attempt to climb, but the airplane continued to descend, rapidly lost airspeed, and subsequently collided with an area of snow-covered terrain.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's inadequate compensation for wind conditions. Factors associated with the accident are variable winds, and a downdraft.

Findings

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

Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - VARIABLE WIND
 2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - DOWNDRAFT
 3. (C) COMPENSATION FOR WIND CONDITIONS - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

4. TERRAIN CONDITION - SNOW COVERED

Factual Information

On July 1, 2001, about 1500 Alaska daylight time, a wheel-equipped Beech H35 airplane, N5429D, sustained substantial damage when it struck mountainous terrain, about 20 miles southwest of Chitina, 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 certificated private pilot, and the one passenger aboard, were not injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and no flight plan was filed. The flight originated at the Cordova Municipal Airport, Cordova, Alaska, about 1420.

During a telephone conversation with the NTSB investigator-in-charge on July 2, the pilot related that he and a friend were flying from Cordova, at 6,000 feet mean sea level, en route to a private airstrip located near Palmer, Alaska. He added that the purpose of the flight was to show his friend some Alaskan scenery. He said he thought the winds were fairly calm as he approached an area of mountainous, snow-covered terrain. While in level, cruise flight, he said the wind increased, and a strong downdraft caused the airplane to descend rapidly. He said he applied full engine power in an attempt to climb, but the airplane continued to descend, rapidly lost airspeed, and subsequently collided with an area of snow-covered terrain. The pilot noted that the airplane was damaged so severely that it may not be repairable. The pilot stated that there was no preaccident mechanical problems with the airplane.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	52, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land	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:	06/25/1999
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	06/21/2001
Flight Time:	915 hours (Total, all aircraft), 307 hours (Total, this make and model), 915 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 14 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 7 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Beech	Registration:	N5429D
Model/Series:	H35	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	D 4922
Landing Gear Type:	Retractable - Tricycle	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	05/23/2001, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2900 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	6.8 Hours	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	4915.2 Hours at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	O-470G
Registered Owner:	Walter P. Granus	Rated Power:	240 hp
Operator:	Walter P. Granus	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:	Scattered / 25000 ft agl	Visibility	20 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:		Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	12 °C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	Cordova, AK (CVD)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Palmer, AK (PAQ)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	1420 ADT	Type of Airspace:	Class E

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	61.454444, -144.995556

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Clinton O Johnson **Report Date:** 05/21/2002

Additional Participating Persons: Darrell K Woodworth; 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](#).