



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

Location:	Seward, AK	Accident Number:	ANC06LA015
Date & Time:	01/02/2006, 1100 AST	Registration:	N212RF
Aircraft:	Cessna 180	Injuries:	1 Fatal, 1 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The airline transport certificated pilot was conducting a personal cross-country flight under Title 14, CFR Part 91, in an area of steep mountainous terrain. The pilot said his routine was to fly over a mountain saddle near the top of a glacier at 4,500 feet above sea level, and continue to his destination. He reported that he was cruising above the glacier at 4,500 feet altitude, when he encountered severe turbulence and downdrafts, and subsequently collided with the glacier. A U.S. Coast Guard C-130 airplane flying in the area received a signal from the accident airplane's emergency locator transmitter, and located the wreckage on the glacier. The aircraft commander said when they arrived over the area, the area was covered in clouds. He said they located clear air, descended, and returned to the accident site underneath the overcast. He said they could see up the glacier, and that there was about 200 feet of clearance between the saddle at the top of the glacier and the cloud cover. He stated as they passed over the wreckage approaching the saddle, their navigation instruments indicated a 40 knot headwind, and noted that the mountain peaks on either side of the saddle were obscured by clouds. He said they had to leave the area due to deteriorating weather. An Air National Guard helicopter dispatched to the accident site aborted several attempts to reach the site due to poor weather, and eventually reached the accident site about 9 hours after the accident. The Air National Guard para-rescue technician who made initial contact with the pilot reported that the pilot said he was flying up the glacier, encountered a downdraft, and turned down slope to "escape" when the airplane contacted the glacier. An area weather forecast valid at the time of the accident, indicated areas of marginal VFR weather with rain and snow showers. The forecast did not forecast any significant turbulence. The closest automated weather reporting facility is 7 miles from the accident site. Observations taken during the timeframe of the accident, reported rapidly varying visibilities from 10 miles to less than 1 mile, and ceilings varying from 100 feet to 6,000 feet. The accident pilot said there were no mechanical anomalies with the airplane prior to the accident. As of August, 2006, the airplane had not been recovered.

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's inadequate weather evaluation, which resulted in an in-flight encounter with low ceilings, turbulence, and downdrafts in cruise flight, and the pilot's failure to maintain altitude/clearance while maneuvering, which resulted in an in-flight collision with terrain. Factors associated with the accident were low ceilings, turbulence, and downdrafts.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER

Phase of Operation: CRUISE

Findings

- 1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - LOW CEILING
 - 2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - DOWNDRAFT
 - 3. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - TURBULENCE
 - 4. (C) WEATHER EVALUATION - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING - TURN TO REVERSE DIRECTION

Findings

- 5. (C) ALTITUDE/CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
- 6. TERRAIN CONDITION - MOUNTAINOUS/HILLY
- 7. TERRAIN CONDITION - SNOW COVERED

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline Transport; Flight Instructor	Age:	60
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Instructor Rating(s):	Instrument Airplane
Flight Time:	25000 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Cessna	Registration:	N212RF
Model/Series:	180	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Operator:	Wayne Koecher	Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None	Engine Model/Series:	O-470K
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:		Weather Information Source:	Witness
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 4500 ft agl	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	40 knots / , 360°
Temperature:	-7° C	Visibility	3 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:	Light - Blowing - Snow		
Departure Point:	Cooper Landing, AK (JLA)	Destination:	Cape Junken, AK

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Latitude, Longitude:	60.155278, -149.215556		

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Lawrence R Lewis	Adopted Date:	08/29/2006
Investigation Docket:	NTSB accident and incident docket 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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