



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

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|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| Location: | Seldovia, AK | Accident Number: | GAA19CA387 |
| Date & Time: | 07/06/2019, 1905 AKD | Registration: | N3556W |
| Aircraft: | Piper PA32 | Aircraft Damage: | Substantial |
| Defining Event: | Collision during takeoff/land | Injuries: | 5 None |
| Flight Conducted Under: | Part 91: General Aviation - Personal | | |

Analysis

The pilot reported that the airplane's gross takeoff weight was 300 lbs less than the maximum allowable takeoff weight. He performed a short-field takeoff from the 1,800-ft-long gravel surface, and the initial climb continued as expected. However, the climb performance then degraded and became insufficient to clear 80-ft-tall trees located about 1,000 ft from the departure end of the runway. The airplane collided with treetops, descended, and subsequently impacted a lake and became submerged. The airplane sustained substantial damage to the stabilator. The pilot reported that there were no preaccident mechanical failures or malfunctions with the airplane that would have precluded normal operation.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

The pilot's failure to attain a sufficient climb following a short-field takeoff, which resulted in collision with trees.

Findings

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| Aircraft | Climb rate - Not attained/maintained (Cause) |
| Personnel issues | Aircraft control - Pilot (Cause) |
| Environmental issues | Tree(s) - Effect on operation (Cause) |

Factual Information

History of Flight

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| Takeoff | Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT) Collision during takeoff/land (Defining event) |
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Pilot Information

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|---------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|------------|
| Certificate: | Private | Age: | 54, Male |
| Airplane Rating(s): | Single-engine Land | Seat Occupied: | Left |
| Other Aircraft Rating(s): | None | Restraint Used: | |
| Instrument Rating(s): | Airplane | Second Pilot Present: | No |
| Instructor Rating(s): | None | Toxicology Performed: | No |
| Medical Certification: | BasicMed | Last FAA Medical Exam: | 05/01/2017 |
| Occupational Pilot: | No | Last Flight Review or Equivalent: | 08/03/2018 |
| Flight Time: | 1229 hours (Total, all aircraft), 671 hours (Total, this make and model), 1194 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 27 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 10 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft) | | |

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

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|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Aircraft Make: | Piper | Registration: | N3556W |
| Model/Series: | PA32 260 | Aircraft Category: | Airplane |
| Year of Manufacture: | 1966 | Amateur Built: | No |
| Airworthiness Certificate: | Normal | Serial Number: | 32-444 |
| Landing Gear Type: | Tricycle | Seats: | 6 |
| Date/Type of Last Inspection: | 07/01/2019, 100 Hour | Certified Max Gross Wt.: | 3400 lbs |
| Time Since Last Inspection: | | Engines: | 1 Reciprocating |
| Airframe Total Time: | 6643.47 Hours | Engine Manufacturer: | Lycoming |
| ELT: | C126 installed, not activated | Engine Model/Series: | O-540-E4B5 |
| Registered Owner: | On file | Rated Power: | 260 hp |
| Operator: | On file | Operating Certificate(s) Held: | None |

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

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|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|------------------|
| Conditions at Accident Site: | Visual Conditions | Condition of Light: | Day |
| Observation Facility, Elevation: | PASO, 29 ft msl | Distance from Accident Site: | 0 Nautical Miles |
| Observation Time: | 0253 UTC | Direction from Accident Site: | 120° |
| Lowest Cloud Condition: | Clear | Visibility | 10 Miles |
| Lowest Ceiling: | None | Visibility (RVR): | |
| Wind Speed/Gusts: | Calm / | Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Wind Direction: | | Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Altimeter Setting: | 30.23 inches Hg | Temperature/Dew Point: | 20° C / 13° C |
| Precipitation and Obscuration: | No Obscuration; No Precipitation | | |
| Departure Point: | Seldovia, AK (ASP) | Type of Flight Plan Filed: | None |
| Destination: | Wasilla, AK (AWS) | Type of Clearance: | None |
| Departure Time: | 0705 AKD | Type of Airspace: | Class G |

Airport Information

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|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|--------|
| Airport: | Seldovia (SOV) | Runway Surface Type: | Gravel |
| Airport Elevation: | 29 ft | Runway Surface Condition: | Wet |
| Runway Used: | 34 | IFR Approach: | None |
| Runway Length/Width: | 1845 ft / 80 ft | VFR Approach/Landing: | None |

Wreckage and Impact Information

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|---------------------|--------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| Crew Injuries: | 1 None | Aircraft Damage: | Substantial |
| Passenger Injuries: | 4 None | Aircraft Fire: | None |
| Ground Injuries: | N/A | Aircraft Explosion: | None |
| Total Injuries: | 5 None | Latitude, Longitude: | 59.443889, -151.705000 (est) |

Administrative Information

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|-----------------------------------|---|--------------|------------|
| Investigator In Charge (IIC): | Michael A Hicks | Report Date: | 05/21/2020 |
| Additional Participating Persons: | Scott Brown; FAA; Anchorage, AK | | |
| Publish Date: | 05/21/2020 | | |
| Note: | This accident report documents the factual circumstances of this accident as described to the NTSB. | | |
| Investigation Docket: | http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/search/dockList.cfm?mKey=99779 | | |

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), established in 1967, is an independent federal agency mandated by Congress through the Independent Safety Board Act of 1974 to investigate transportation accidents, determine the probable causes of the accidents, issue safety recommendations, study transportation safety issues, and evaluate the safety effectiveness of government agencies involved in transportation. The NTSB makes public its actions and decisions through accident reports, safety studies, special investigation reports, safety recommendations, and statistical reviews.

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](#).