



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	DILLINGHAM, AK	Accident Number:	ANC98LA138
Date & Time:	09/02/1998, 1002 AKD	Registration:	N139F
Aircraft:	Grumman G-44	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	3 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 135: Air Taxi & Commuter - Non-scheduled		

Analysis

The commercial pilot departed under special VFR conditions on a CFR part 135 flight for a remote lake. During the flight, low clouds, rain, and fog were present in an area of mountainous terrain along the route of flight. The pilot stated that he intended to utilize a narrow mountain pass to transit the area, and as he entered the mountain pass, discovered that the ceiling and visibility would not allow safe passage. He said that he made an emergency 180 degree turn in an attempt to exit the pass, and subsequently collided with terrain. After initial impact, the airplane slid downhill about 100 feet, and came to rest on a 35 degree slope. The pilot stated that weather conditions at the time of the accident consisted of: Ceiling, 500 foot overcast; visibility, 2 miles with rain and fog; wind 360 degrees, at 8 knots. The pilot noted that there were no preaccident anomalies with the airplane.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's failure to maintain clearance with terrain. Contributing factors were the pilot's delayed remedial action (course reversal), low ceilings, rain, fog, and mountainous terrain.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING - TURN TO REVERSE DIRECTION

Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - LOW CEILING
2. (F) REMEDIAL ACTION - DELAYED - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - FOG
4. (C) CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - RAIN
6. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - MOUNTAINOUS/HILLY

Factual Information

On September 2, 1998, about 1002 Alaska daylight time, an amphibious Grumman G-44 airplane, N139F, sustained substantial damage during a collision with mountainous terrain, about 80 miles north of Dillingham, Alaska. The airplane was being operated as a visual flight rules (VFR) on-demand passenger flight under Title 14, CFR Part 135, when the accident occurred. The airplane was operated by Fresh Water Adventures, Inc., Dillingham. The certificated commercial pilot, and the two passengers aboard were not injured. Instrument meteorological conditions prevailed at the time of departure, and company flight following procedures were in effect. The flight originated at the Dillingham Airport, about 0840, under special VFR weather conditions.

During a telephone conversation with the National Transportation Safety Board investigator-in-charge on September 2, the pilot reported that he was transporting two hunters to a remote lake located about 100 miles north of Dillingham. During the flight, low clouds, rain, and fog were present in an area of mountainous terrain along the route of flight. The pilot stated that he intended to utilize a narrow mountain pass to transit the area, and as he entered the mountain pass, discovered that the ceiling and visibility would not allow safe passage. He said that he made an emergency 180 degree turn in an attempt to exit the pass, and subsequently collided with terrain. After initial impact, the airplane slid downhill about 100 feet, and came to rest on a 35 degree slope.

The airplane sustained substantial damage to the fuselage, wings, and elevator.

The pilot stated that weather conditions at the time of the accident consisted of: Ceiling, 500 foot overcast; visibility, 2 miles with rain and fog; wind 360 degrees, at 8 knots.

The closest official weather observation station is Dillingham, located about 80 nautical miles southeast of the accident site. On September 2, 1998, at 0925, an Aviation Routine Weather Report (METAR) was reporting, in part: Wind, 330 degrees at 6 knots; visibility, 3 statute miles with light rain and mist; clouds, 500 feet broken, 800 feet overcast; temperature, 48 degrees F; dew point, 48 degrees F; altimeter, 29.34 inHg.

The pilot noted that there were no preaccident anomalies with the airplane.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	40, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Multi-engine Sea; Single-engine Land; Single-engine Sea	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt, Shoulder harness
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	06/03/1998
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	7800 hours (Total, all aircraft), 750 hours (Total, this make and model), 7600 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 350 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 100 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Grumman	Registration:	N139F
Model/Series:	G-44 G-44	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	1375
Landing Gear Type:	Amphibian	Seats:	5
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	09/01/1998, 100 Hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	5400 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	2 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	Continental
ELT:	Installed, activated, aided in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	IO-470-D
Registered Owner:	LESTER R. BINGMAN	Rated Power:	260 hp
Operator:	FRESH WATER ADVENTURES	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	On-demand Air Taxi (135)
Operator Does Business As:	FRESH WATER ADVENTURES, INC.	Operator Designator Code:	BPMC

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	PAD, 86 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	80 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	0925 ADT	Direction from Accident Site:	150°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown / 0 ft agl	Visibility	3 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 500 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	6 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	330°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	8° C / 8° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	, AK (DLG)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	Company VFR
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	Special VFR
Departure Time:	0940 ADT	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	2 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	3 None	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	CLINTON O JOHNSON	Report Date:	03/30/2000
Additional Participating Persons:	ROBERT J MERCER (FAA); 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 pubin@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](#).