



National Transportation Safety Board

Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	MERRILL PASS, AK	Accident Number:	ANC85FA184
Date & Time:	09/26/1985, 1230 AKD	Registration:	N5317G
Aircraft:	de Havilland DHC-2	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	3 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 135: Air Taxi & Commuter - Non-scheduled		

Analysis

THE ACFT COLLIDED WITH TERRAIN IN A MOUNTAIN PASS AT AN ELEVATION OF 3600 FT MSL. THE PLT OBTAINED A WX BRIEFING AT 1329 GMT ON 9/26/86 AT WHICH TIME MERRILL PASS WAS FORECAST TO BE CLOSED BY 1100 ADT DUE TO DETERIORATING WX. THE LAST RADIO COMMUNICATION WITH THE ACFT WAS AT 1803 GMT WHEN CONTACT WAS MADE WITH MCGRATH FSS. AT THIS TIME THE PLT MADE A PLT REPORT STATING THE WX AT MERRILL PASS WAS MARGINAL; 2 MILES VIS WITH SNOW AND OCCASIONAL MODERATE TURBULENCE. THE WRECKAGE WAS LOCATED ON 6/29/85 AND INDICATED THE ACFT CONTACTED THE TERRAIN IN A RELATIVELY LEVEL ATTITUDE WITH CONSIDERABLE AIRSPEED.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER

Phase of Operation: CRUISE

Findings

1. (C) IN-FLIGHT PLANNING/DECISION - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (F) IMPROPER USE OF PROCEDURE - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (C) FLIGHT INTO KNOWN ADVERSE WEATHER - CONTINUED - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - TURBULENCE
5. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - SNOW
6. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - OBSCURATION

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

Findings

7. (C) TERRAIN CONDITION - MOUNTAINOUS/HILLY
8. (C) ALTITUDE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	27, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land; Single-engine Sea	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Glider	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 1 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	07/26/1985
Occupational Pilot:	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:		
Flight Time:	4900 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1200 hours (Total, this make and model), 4650 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 50 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 20 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 3 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	de Havilland	Registration:	N5317G
Model/Series:	DHC-2 DHC-2	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	617
Landing Gear Type:	Float	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	05/06/1985, 100 Hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	5090 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	95 Hours	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	7640 Hours	Engine Manufacturer:	P&W
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	R-985-14B
Registered Owner:	WILLOW AIR SERVICE	Rated Power:	450 hp
Operator:	WILLOW AIR SERVICE	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	On-demand Air Taxi (135)
Operator Does Business As:	WILLOW AIR SERVICE	Operator Designator Code:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	, 0 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	0 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	1400	Direction from Accident Site:	0°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown / 4500 ft agl	Visibility	30 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 4500 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	3°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	HIDDEN RIVER, AK	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	VFR
Destination:	WILLOW, AK (Z22)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	1130 ADT	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

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

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	JAMES MICHELANGELO	Report Date:
Additional Participating Persons:	PAUL RAKER; 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.ntsb.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](#).