



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	BETHEL, AK	Accident Number:	ANC95LA036
Date & Time:	03/20/1995, 1155 AST	Registration:	N1719U
Aircraft:	CESSNA 207A	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 None

Flight Conducted Under: Part 135: Air Taxi & Commuter - Scheduled

Analysis

AFTER RECEIVING A SPECIAL VFR (SVFR) CLEARANCE, THE PILOT DEPARTED THE AIRPORT WITH A PASSENGER ON A SCHEDULED COMMUTER FLIGHT TO A REMOTE AIRPORT. ABOUT 14 MILES NORTH OF THE AIRPORT, AT 1,000 FEET MEAN SEA LEVEL (MSL), THE PILOT ENCOUNTERED WHITEOUT CONDITIONS AND REVERSED COURSE, DESCENDING TO ABOUT 500 FEET MSL. THE PILOT REQUESTED A SVFR ARRIVAL BACK TO THE DEPARTURE AIRPORT AND BEGAN MANEUVERING TO INTERCEPT THE INBOUND COURSE. WHILE IN INSTRUMENT METEOROLOGICAL CONDITIONS, THE AIRPLANE DESCENDED AND COLLIDED WITH FLAT, SNOW COVERED TERRAIN ABOUT 5 MILE NORTH OF THE AIRPORT. THE PILOT WAS UNABLE TO DISTINGUISH ANY TERRAIN FEATURES UNTIL IMPACT WITH THE GROUND.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE PILOT'S CONTINUED VFR FLIGHT INTO IMC CONDITIONS AND A FAILURE TO MAINTAIN ALTITUDE. A FACTOR IN THE ACCIDENT WAS 'WHITEOUT' WEATHER CONDITIONS.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

Findings

1. TERRAIN CONDITION - SNOW COVERED
2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - WHITEOUT
3. (C) VFR FLIGHT INTO IMC - CONTINUED - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (C) ALTITUDE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

On March 20, 1995, about 1155 hours Alaska standard time, a Cessna 207A, N1719U, collided with terrain while maneuvering about 5 miles north of Bethel, Alaska. The airplane was being operated as a visual flight rules (VFR) scheduled commuter flight to Kalskag, Alaska, under Title 14 CFR Part 135 when the accident occurred. The airplane, operated as flight number 750 by Yute Air Alaska Inc., Anchorage, Alaska, sustained substantial damage.

The certificated commercial pilot and one passenger were not injured. Instrument meteorological conditions prevailed in the area of the accident. A company VFR flight plan was filed. The flight originated at Bethel Airport about 1130 hours.

The operator reported that when the flight departed, the pilot requested and was granted a Special VFR (SVFR) departure from the Bethel Air Traffic Control Zone. The pilot was initially flying about 1,000 feet mean sea level about 14 miles north of the airport when he encountered blowing snow and zero visibility. The pilot turned around and descended to about 500 feet and requested a SVFR arrival back to Bethel. While the pilot was maneuvering to intercept the 055 degree radial of the Bethel VOR, the airplane descended into flat snow covered terrain and received damage to the landing gear, wings, and fuselage.

The 1151 hours special weather observation from Bethel indicated in part: Sky partially obscured, measured ceiling 1,000 feet broken, 2,000 feet overcast; visibility, 2 1/2 miles in blowing snow; temperature, 5 degree F; dew point, -2 degree F; wind, 280 degrees at 20 knots; altimeter, 30.19 inHg; remarks, blowing snow covering 4/10 of the sky, visibility 2 miles variable to 4 miles, tower visibility 3 miles, overcast layer is partially thin. Section 524, Cold Weather Operations, of the operator's operations manual, flight operational procedures, states in part:

"F. Enroute, 1. Weather conditions vary considerably in cold climates. Snow showers and whiteouts are to be expected. When penetration is made of a snow shower, a pilot should be prepared to refer to the instruments as visibility may be quickly lost. 2. Another hazard which has claimed as its victims some very competent pilots, is a 'whiteout'. This condition is illusive and can occur under a high ceiling where the sun filters through and bounces off the snow covered terrain. The result is a loss of visual cues and one feels as if he were flying in a 'milk bottle'. The pilot should rely on his instruments rather than usual references when these conditions are encountered."

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Flight Instructor; Commercial	Age:	40, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Gyroplane; Helicopter	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt, Shoulder harness
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane Single-engine; Helicopter	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	12/29/1994
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	1434 hours (Total, all aircraft), 158 hours (Total, this make and model), 1245 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 92 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 19 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	CESSNA	Registration:	N1719U
Model/Series:	207A 207A	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	20700319
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	8
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	02/12/1995, 100 Hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3800 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	78 Hours	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	11868 Hours	Engine Manufacturer:	CONTINENTAL
ELT:	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	IO-520-F
Registered Owner:	YUTE AIR ALASKA INC.	Rated Power:	300 hp
Operator:	YUTE AIR ALASKA INC.	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	Commuter Air Carrier (135)
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	YAAA

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	BET, 123 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	5 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	1151 AST	Direction from Accident Site:	187°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Partial Obscuration / 1000 ft agl	Visibility	2 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 1000 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	20 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	280°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	-15° C / -18° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:		Type of Flight Plan Filed:	Company VFR
Destination:	KALSKAG, AK (KLG)	Type of Clearance:	Special VFR
Departure Time:	1130 AST	Type of Airspace:	Class C

Airport Information

Airport:	BETHEL (BET)	Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	None

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:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	SCOTT R ERICKSON	Report Date:	06/29/1995
Additional Participating Persons:	THOMAS ELDRIDGE; 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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