



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	KETCHIKAN, AK	Accident Number:	ANC95LA034
Date & Time:	03/10/1995, 0745 AST	Registration:	N6478H
Aircraft:	CESSNA 207A	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	3 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 135: Air Taxi & Commuter - Scheduled		

Analysis

PRIOR TO DEPARTING ON A SCHEDULED AIR TAXI FLIGHT WITH TWO PASSENGERS, THE PILOT OBTAINED A WEATHER BRIEFING THAT INCLUDED AIRMETS FOR MOUNTAIN OBSCURATION, IFR AND ICING CONDITIONS. VFR FLIGHT WAS NOT RECOMMENDED. A COMPANY FLIGHT THAT DEPARTED BEFORE THE ACCIDENT FLIGHT, RETURNED TO THE COMPANY BASE DUE TO LOW CEILINGS, AFTER THE ACCIDENT FLIGHT DEPARTED. THE FLIGHT DEPARTED ON A VFR FLIGHT PLAN AND ENCOUNTERED LOW CEILINGS IN THE AREA OF MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN. THE PILOT BEGAN MANEUVERING AROUND THE TERRAIN AND DURING A PERIOD OF OBSCURATION, COLLIDED WITH SEVERAL TREES. THE COMPANY OPERATIONS MANUAL SPECIFIES THAT THE PILOT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CONDUCT OF THE FLIGHT; HOWEVER, PROCEDURES ARE INCLUDED THAT DETAIL THE DISPATCH RESPONSIBILITIES, DISSEMINATION OF WEATHER INFORMATION, AND THE DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS RESPONSIBILITY TO MONITOR AND CANCEL FLIGHTS IF NECESSARY.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE PILOT'S CONTINUED VISUAL FLIGHT RULES (VFR) FLIGHT INTO INSTRUMENT METEOROLOGICAL CONDITIONS (IMC). FACTORS IN THE ACCIDENT WERE FOG AND LOW CEILINGS, AND A FAILURE OF THE OPERATOR TO FOLLOW THEIR PROCEDURES SPECIFIED IN THE COMPANY OPERATIONS MANUAL.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

Findings

1. TERRAIN CONDITION - MOUNTAINOUS/HILLY
2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - FOG
3. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - LOW CEILING
4. (C) VFR FLIGHT INTO IMC - CONTINUED - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. (F) PROCEDURES/DIRECTIVES - NOT FOLLOWED - COMPANY/OPERATOR MANAGEMENT

Factual Information

On March 10, 1995, about 0745 Alaska standard time, a Cessna 207, N6478H, collided with terrain about 28 miles northwest of Ketchikan, Alaska. The airplane was being operated as a visual flight rules (VFR) scheduled commuter flight to Wrangell, Alaska, under Title 14 CFR Part 135 when the accident occurred. The airplane, operated by Ketchikan Air Service, Ketchikan, was destroyed. The certificated commercial pilot and two passengers received serious injuries. Instrument meteorological conditions prevailed in the area. A VFR flight plan was filed. The flight originated at the Ketchikan International Airport at 0721.

At 0719, just prior to departure, the Ketchikan Flight Service Station (FSS) Air Traffic Control (ATC) specialist provided the pilot with a pilot report (PIREP). The specialist stated: "Looks like out in the straits, five hundred overcast, visibility two to three." The pilot acknowledged the report and departed runway 29. After departure, the flight proceeded northwest toward the destination. At 0726 the FSS specialist provided the pilot with a PIREP that indicated, "...weather five hundred overcast, visibility two to three in straits." The pilot replied, "Roger, I'm going to try Spacious Bay, go up that way then."

About 0745, the pilot was overheard on a company radio frequency stating: "I'm crashing, I'm crashing." The last position report for the accident aircraft received by the company dispatcher was in the area of Spacious Bay/Port Stewart. An emergency locator transmitter (ELT) signal was then received by search personnel. The airplane was located about 1150 about 2,000 feet mean sea level (msl).

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) inspectors, Juneau Flight Standards District Office (FSDO), interviewed the passengers of the flight. The pilot's medical condition precluded any interview. The passengers reported that during the flight, the terrain was intermittently obscured by clouds and rain. The airplane entered an area of clouds and the pilot began maneuvering the airplane around the terrain. During a period of obscuration, the airplane collided with trees.

The pilot received an in-person weather briefing from the Ketchikan Flight Service Station (FSS) prior to the flight. The briefer provided an abbreviated briefing that included a caution that VFR operations were not recommended.

The area forecast included several notice to airmen (AIRMETs) for occasional mountain obscuration due to clouds and precipitation; turbulence below 6,000 feet; instrument conditions with occasional ceilings below 1,000 feet and visibility below 3 miles with light rain, snow, and fog; and icing conditions with light to moderate rime icing in clouds and precipitation between 3,000 and 15,000 feet.

The closest official weather observation station is Ketchikan, which is located 28 nautical miles southeast of the accident site. At 0751, a surface observation was reporting in part: Sky condition and ceiling, 1,100 feet scattered, estimated 2,000 feet broken, 2,600 feet overcast; visibility, 5 miles in light rain, light snow and fog; temperature, 35 degrees F; dew point, 32 degrees F; wind, calm; altimeter, 28.93 inHg.

A company pilot that departed Ketchikan about 0705 reported low ceilings of about 500 feet with lower conditions toward the northwest. The pilot decided to cancel his flight and returned to his company base. As he was landing, he observed the accident aircraft departing the area and attempted to contact the pilot. There was no response and the company pilot transmitted

a weather advisory on the company radio, indicating that the..."weather out in the strait are solid and low." Another pilot conducting search operations in the area of the accident reported that the mountain passes and ridges were obscured by clouds/fog and moderate snow. The ceilings varied from 1,000 to 2,000 feet.

A review of the operators operations manual revealed that section 4.02.00, Crew Reporting, states: "As a general rule, one hour prior to departure will be considered sufficient for: 1. Servicing of the aircraft and preflight. 2. Weather briefing and filing of a flight plan."

Section 4.03.00, Crew Briefing, states: "Before arrival at the aircraft, flight crew personnel will be briefed by the dispatcher on duty regarding route to be flown, current and forecast weather, fuel requirements and any other information necessary for the planning and execution of the flight."

Section 4.06.01, Flight Scheduling, states in part..."The director of operations will monitor flight conditions and may cancel flights if conditions warrant. If the director of operations is not available during the conduct of any company flight, then the duties will be assigned to the chief pilot. The pilot-in-command is the final authority on all flights and has the responsibility to cancel any flight if, in his opinion the weather and/or other factors would prevent the safe completion of the flight. All flights are to be undertaken in accordance with appropriate Federal Aviation Regulations, VFR flight plan, ATC clearances, operations specifications and other appropriate company policies and procedures set forth in this operations manual."

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	36, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	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:	10/17/1994
Occupational Pilot:	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:		
Flight Time:	1352 hours (Total, all aircraft), 750 hours (Total, this make and model), 240 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 84 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	CESSNA	Registration:	N6478H
Model/Series:	207A 207A	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	20700538
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	Seats:	7
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	03/08/1995, 100 Hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3800 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	1 Hours	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	16116 Hours	Engine Manufacturer:	CONTINENTAL
ELT:	Installed, activated, aided in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	IO-520-F
Registered Owner:	KETCHIKAN AIR SERVICE INC.	Rated Power:	300 hp
Operator:	KETCHIKAN AIR SERVICE INC.	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	Commuter Air Carrier (135); On-demand Air Taxi (135)
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	EKQA

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KTN, 88 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	28 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	0751 AST	Direction from Accident Site:	135°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 1000 ft agl	Visibility	5 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 1900 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	Calm /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	28 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	2° C / 0° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	, AK (KTN)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	VFR
Destination:	WRANGELL, AK (WRG)	Type of Clearance:	VFR
Departure Time:	0720 AST	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

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

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	SCOTT R ERICKSON	Report Date:	06/29/1995
Additional Participating Persons:	ROBERT W KOLVIG; JUNEAU, 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 pubinquiry@ntsb.gov , or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/ .		

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