Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Bainbridge Island, Washington	**Accident Number:**	WPR18LA151
Date & Time:	May 27, 2018, 17:05 Local	**Registration:**	N6AF
Aircraft:	Cessna 150M	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Defining Event:	Controlled flight into terr/obj (CFIT)	**Injuries:**	1 Fatal, 1 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The private pilot and passenger departed on a pleasure flight over the water; radar data showed that the airplane was at an altitude about 700 ft mean sea level. The passenger stated that she was concerned about how low the airplane was flying, but the pilot reassured her that they were fine and able to fly safely 200 ft above the water. The pilot then looked down at his tablet, which he was using for navigation, and the passenger saw him push the flight control yoke forward. The airplane descended and subsequently impacted the water and nosed over. The passenger was able to egress on her own as the airplane began to sink; however, the pilot appeared unconscious and did not exit the airplane.

Neither the wreckage nor the pilot's remains were recovered. Although the wreckage could not be examined, the passenger reported no mechanical problems with the airplane before the impact. It is likely that, as the pilot was looking down at his tablet, he inadvertently pushed the control yoke forward, causing the airplane to descend into the water. Because of his distraction in using his tablet to navigate, he failed to detect the descent.

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 from the water and his distraction by using the tablet for navigation, which resulted in his failure to detect that the airplane had entered a descent.

Findings

Aircraft	Altitude - Not attained/maintained
Personnel issues	Attention - Pilot
Personnel issues	Task monitoring/vigilance - Pilot
Personnel issues	Monitoring environment - Pilot
Personnel issues	Use of charts - Pilot

Factual Information

History of Flight

Enroute-descent	Altitude deviation
Enroute-descent	Controlled flight into terr/obj (CFIT) (Defining event)

On May 27, 2018, about 1705 Pacific daylight time, a Cessna 150M airplane, N6AF, was substantially damaged when it impacted water near Bainbridge Island, Washington. The private pilot was fatally injured, and the passenger was seriously injured. The airplane was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91 personal flight.

According to the passenger, before departure from Harvey Field Airport (S43), Snohomish, Washington, the pilot used his iPad for navigation via the ForeFlight application. They took off and landed at Vashon Island, Washington.

After takeoff from Vashon Island, while flying over the water, the passenger told the pilot that she thought the airplane was too low. The pilot replied that they were fine and that they were able to fly safely 200 ft above the water. The passenger stated that the pilot looked down at the iPad and she saw him push the flight control yoke forward. The airplane subsequently impacted the water and flipped over. The passenger reported that she blacked out for a short time. When she regained consciousness, she saw the pilot still restrained by his seat belt and slumped over; he appeared to be unconscious. The passenger was able to egress on her own as the airplane began to sink. The passenger reported that there were no mechanical problems with the airplane before the impact. An individual on a boat in the area of the accident site saw the splash of water when the airplane impacted the water, marked the location via a GPS device, and rescued the passenger.

A witness on the shore was looking out toward the water when she saw a low-flying airplane. The airplane came into view and was descending in a nose-low attitude. She initially thought it was going to skim the water and perform a loop, but the airplane continued its descent until it impacted the water. The airplane flipped over and quickly sank.

Radar data captured the airplane as it departed to the south from Vashon Island, then turned northbound over the waterway on the west side of Vashon Island. The flight continued north over the water at an altitude of about 700 ft mean sea level (msl) until radar contact was lost about 0.1 nautical mile from the accident site.

Search efforts on the day of the accident were unsuccessful in locating the wreckage. On June 14, an independent dive team located the wreckage inverted on the sea floor at a depth of 176 ft below the surface. The airplane was not recovered at that time. When the dive team returned to recover the wreckage, it was no longer at that location and could not be located again.

The pilot's remains were not recovered.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	**Age:**	70,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	**Seat Occupied:**	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	**Restraint Used:**	3-point
Instrument Rating(s):	None	**Second Pilot Present:**	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	**Toxicology Performed:**	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Without waivers/limitations	**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	December 16, 2016
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	
Flight Time:	0 hours (Total, all aircraft), 0 hours (Total, this make and model)		

Passenger Information

Certificate:		**Age:**	
Airplane Rating(s):		**Seat Occupied:**	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):		**Restraint Used:**	Unknown
Instrument Rating(s):		**Second Pilot Present:**	No
Instructor Rating(s):		**Toxicology Performed:**	No
Medical Certification:		**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	
Occupational Pilot:	No	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	
Flight Time:			

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Cessna	**Registration:**	N6AF
Model/Series:	150M M	**Aircraft Category:**	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1974	**Amateur Built:**	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal; Utility	**Serial Number:**	15076185
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle	**Seats:**	
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Unknown	**Certified Max Gross Wt.:**	1601 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		**Engines:**	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		**Engine Manufacturer:**	CONT MOTOR
ELT:		**Engine Model/Series:**	O-200 SERIES
Registered Owner:		**Rated Power:**	100 Horsepower
Operator:	On file	**Operating Certificate(s) Held:**	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	**Condition of Light:**	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KSEA,434 ft msl	**Distance from Accident Site:**	19 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	16:53 Local	**Direction from Accident Site:**	151°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 4000 ft AGL	**Visibility**	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	**Visibility (RVR):**	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	6 knots /	**Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:**	None / None
Wind Direction:	270°	**Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:**	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	30.26 inches Hg	**Temperature/Dew Point:**	15°C / 8°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Snohomish, WA (S43)	**Type of Flight Plan Filed:**	VFR
Destination:	Bainbridge Island, WA	**Type of Clearance:**	VFR
Departure Time:		**Type of Airspace:**	

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Serious	**Aircraft Fire:**	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	**Aircraft Explosion:**	None
Total Injuries:	1 Fatal, 1 Serious	**Latitude, Longitude:**	47.723888,-122.543891(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Cornejo, Tealeye
Additional Participating Persons:	
Original Publish Date:	July 13, 2020
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=97330

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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.