



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Beluga, Alaska	Accident Number:	ANC23LA049
Date & Time:	July 1, 2023, 12:40 Local	Registration:	N15XX
Aircraft:	Piper PA-18	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)	Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot landed on a remote unimproved landing strip that was surrounded by overgrown vegetation. When the pilot attempted to takeoff, the left wing struck a stand of bushes, which pivoted the airplane to the left, and he was unable to maintain control of the airplane and subsequently impacted more bushes. The airplane sustained substantial damage to the wings. The pilot reported that there were no preaccident mechanical malfunctions or failures with the airplane that would have precluded normal operation.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

The pilot's selection of an unsuitable takeoff site, resulting in a collision with brush-covered terrain.

Findings

Personnel issues	Decision making/judgment - Pilot
Environmental issues	Tree(s) - Effect on equipment

Factual Information

History of Flight

Takeoff	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT) (Defining event)
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Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline transport	Age:	74, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Single-engine sea; Multi-engine land; Multi-engine sea	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	3-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	December 15, 2021
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	November 14, 2022
Flight Time:	11184 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1121 hours (Total, this make and model), 11984 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 67 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 26 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Passenger Information

Certificate:		Age:	Male
Airplane Rating(s):		Seat Occupied:	Rear
Other Aircraft Rating(s):		Restraint Used:	3-point
Instrument Rating(s):		Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):		Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:		Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:			

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N15XX
Model/Series:	PA-18	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1951	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	18-811
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	May 5, 2023 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2000 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	43 Hrs as of last inspection	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	O-320-A28
Registered Owner:	DALKS LEASING INC	Rated Power:	160 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:	AEN,99 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	29 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	12:53 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	145°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	9 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	220°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.08 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	13°C / 8°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Wasilla, AK (AAK6)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Beluga, AK	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	10:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class E

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:	60.971564,-151.80398(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Hill, Millicent
Additional Participating Persons:	Andy Flack; FAA/FSDO; Anchorage, AK
Original Publish Date:	January 25, 2024
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 4
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=192638

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person” (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available [here](#).