



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

<b>Location:</b>	Point Thomson, Alaska	<b>Accident Number:</b>	ANC23LA036
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	May 17, 2023, 12:22 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N34WM
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Piper PA31	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>	Controlled flight into terr/obj (CFIT)	<b>Injuries:</b>	2 None
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 135: Air taxi & commuter - Non-scheduled		

## Analysis

The pilot reported that while established on an RNAV GPS instrument approach to a remote airport, flat light conditions made it difficult to discern topographical features of the snow-covered terrain below. Prior to reaching the decision height altitude, the pilot said he looked outside for the runway environment, but the flat light condition caused him to spend more time looking outside and he became disorientated. When he looked back at the airplane's instruments, he noticed the airplane was below the glide path and initiated a go-around maneuver; however, the airplane subsequently impacted snow-covered terrain. 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 inadvertent descent below the published minimum descent altitude, while operating in flat light conditions, which resulted in controlled flight into terrain.

## Findings

<b>Personnel issues</b>	Aircraft control - Pilot
<b>Personnel issues</b>	Task monitoring/vigilance - Pilot
<b>Environmental issues</b>	Flat light - Contributed to outcome
<b>Environmental issues</b>	Snowy/icy terrain - Contributed to outcome
<b>Aircraft</b>	Descent/approach/glide path - Not attained/maintained

## Factual Information

### History of Flight

<b>Approach-IFR final approach</b>	Controlled flight into terr/obj (CFIT) (Defining event)
<b>Approach-IFR final approach</b>	Loss of visual reference

### Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Commercial	<b>Age:</b>	30,Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Left
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	3-point
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	Airplane	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	Yes
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	Airplane single-engine	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 1 With waivers/limitations	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	May 3, 2023
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	Yes	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	November 6, 2022
<b>Flight Time:</b>	1636 hours (Total, all aircraft), 89 hours (Total, this make and model), 1558 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 110 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 45 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 5 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

### Pilot-rated passenger Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Airline transport; Commercial	<b>Age:</b>	47,Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Right
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	3-point
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	Airplane	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	Yes
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 2 With waivers/limitations	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	March 8, 2023
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	Yes	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	
<b>Flight Time:</b>	7145 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Piper	<b>Registration:</b>	N34WM
<b>Model/Series:</b>	PA31 350	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Airplane
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>	1973	<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	31-7305125
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Retractable - Tricycle	<b>Seats:</b>	5
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	May 8, 2023 AAIP	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	7368 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>		<b>Engines:</b>	2 Reciprocating
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	19217 Hrs at time of accident	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Lycoming
<b>ELT:</b>	C126 installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	TIO-540-J2B
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	70 NORTH LLC	<b>Rated Power:</b>	360 Horsepower
<b>Operator:</b>	JuniPogo LLC	<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	On-demand air taxi (135)
<b>Operator Does Business As:</b>	70 North	<b>Operator Designator Code:</b>	3JPA

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Instrument (IMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	PASC, 58 ft msl	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	45 Nautical Miles
<b>Observation Time:</b>	12:18 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	275°
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Few / 500 ft AGL	<b>Visibility</b>	1 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	Broken / 1500 ft AGL	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	6 knots /	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Wind Direction:</b>	60°	<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	30.21 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	-3°C / -5°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	Moderate - None - Mist		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	Deadhorse, AK (PASC)	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	IFR
<b>Destination:</b>	Point Thomson, AK	<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	IFR
<b>Departure Time:</b>	12:04 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class G

## Airport Information

<b>Airport:</b>	POINT THOMSON AIRSTRIP 37AA	<b>Runway Surface Type:</b>	
<b>Airport Elevation:</b>	56 ft msl	<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	Snow
<b>Runway Used:</b>		<b>IFR Approach:</b>	RNAV
<b>Runway Length/Width:</b>		<b>VFR Approach/Landing:</b>	None

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 None	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>	1 None	<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>		<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	2 None	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	70.136,-146.29002(est)

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Hill, Millicent
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	James Howery; FAA/FSDO; Anchorage, AK
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	October 20, 2023
<b>Last Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Investigation Class:</b>	<a href="#">Class 4</a>
<b>Note:</b>	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	<a href="https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=192218">https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=192218</a>

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