



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

<b>Location:</b>	Anchorage, Alaska	<b>Accident Number:</b>	ANC23LA015
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	January 16, 2023, 14:08 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N3904M
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Piper PA-12	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>	Loss of control on ground	<b>Injuries:</b>	1 None
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

## Analysis

The pilot reported that, during landing on a snow-covered frozen lake in a tundra tire-equipped airplane, the main landing gear wheels broke through the hard-packed snow, and the airplane subsequently nosed over, sustaining substantial damage to the wings, lift struts and rudder. The pilot reported no preimpact 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 landing site, resulting in the main landing gear wheels breaking through the snow, and a subsequent nose over.

## Findings

<b>Aircraft</b>	(general) - Capability exceeded
<b>Personnel issues</b>	Decision making/judgment - Pilot

## Factual Information

### History of Flight

Landing-landing roll	Loss of control on ground (Defining event)
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### Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	53,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Single-engine sea	Seat Occupied:	Center
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	3-point
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 3 None	Last FAA Medical Exam:	January 24, 2022
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	January 22, 2023
Flight Time:	299 hours (Total, all aircraft), 181 hours (Total, this make and model), 227 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 6 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

### Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N3904M
Model/Series:	PA-12	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:	1947	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	12-2803
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	3
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	September 21, 2022 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1935 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	5 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	2574.3 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	C126 installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	o-320-D2B
Registered Owner:	On file	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:		Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:	14:08 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	9 miles
Lowest Ceiling:		Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	None / None
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	-3.9°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Anchorage, AK (PALH)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Anchorage, AK	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	14:08 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

## Airport Information

Airport:	Campbell Lake A11	Runway Surface Type:	Ice;Snow
Airport Elevation:	20 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Snow
Runway Used:	24	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	800 ft / 15 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Traffic pattern

## Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	61.132206,-149.94506

## Administrative Information

**Investigator In Charge (IIC):** Ward, Mark

**Additional Participating Persons:** TY Watts; FAA; Anchorage, AK

**Original Publish Date:** April 6, 2023

**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=106629>

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](#).