



Aviation Investigation Preliminary Report

Location:	Old Harbor, AK	Accident Number:	ANC23FA045
Date & Time:	July 2, 2023, 15:10 Local	Registration:	N1132Q
Aircraft:	Piper PA-32-300	Injuries:	2 Fatal, 3 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 135: Air taxi & commuter - Non-scheduled		

On July 2, 2023, about 1510 Alaska daylight time, a Piper-32-300 airplane, N1132Q sustained substantial damage when it was involved in an accident near Old Harbor, Alaska. Of the five occupants on board, the pilot and one passenger sustained serious injuries, one passenger sustained critical injuries, and two passengers were fatally injured. The airplane was operated by the pilot as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 135 on-demand charter flight.

The airplane was operated by Vertigo Air Taxi, Kodiak, Alaska, and according to the operator’s chief pilot, the airplane departed from Old Harbor Airport (OLH), Old Harbor, at about 1504 ADT and was transporting four passengers, and their baggage, back to Kodiak.

During a brief conversation with the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigator-in-charge (IIC) in the Kodiak hospital emergency room, the accident pilot reported that shortly after departing from OLH, the flight subsequently progressed north and into an area of rising, tree and alder-covered terrain. He said that while climbing the airplane towards the rising terrain, while traversing the left side of the mountain valley, he determined he needed to make a 180°turn to gain additional altitude to clear the 950 ft. mean sea level (msl) mountain pass ahead. He then maneuvered the airplane to the right side of the valley so he could make a left climbing turn. When the airplane reached the right side of the valley, he said the airplane would not climb, and he believed the airplane was in a downdraft condition. Fearing that the airplane had insufficient altitude to make the left turn and away from the rising terrain, he selected an area of mountainous, uneven, alder-covered terrain as a forced landing site. During the collision sequence, the airplane struck two mountainous spurs before coming to rest on a third. The fragmented airplane wreckage subsequently came to rest at an elevation of about 750 ft. msl, in an area of thick, alder-covered terrain.



Figure 1 Aerial view of wreckage site. (NTSB Photo)

The NTSB IIC, along with an Alaska State Trooper, reached the accident site on the morning of July 3, and determined that all the airplane's major components were located at the main accident site. An initial on scene wreckage examination revealed no preaccident anomalies. However, a detailed post recovery airframe and engine examination are pending.



Figure 2 View looking south down valley from accident site. (NTSB Photo)

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N1132Q
Model/Series:	PA-32-300	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Amateur Built:			
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	On-demand air taxi (135)
Operator Designator Code:			

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	VMC	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	PADQ,16 ft msl	Observation Time:	15:21 Local
Distance from Accident Site:	38 Nautical Miles	Temperature/Dew Point:	11°C /10°C
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 300 ft AGL	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	8 knots / , 80°
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 1400 ft AGL	Visibility:	8 miles
Altimeter Setting:	29.95 inches Hg	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	Company VFR
Departure Point:	Old Harbor , AK (OLH)	Destination:	Kodiak , AK (ADQ)

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	2 Fatal, 2 Serious	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Fatal, 3 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	57.240995,-153.17977

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Ward, Mark
Additional Participating Persons:	Charles (Chip) Versaw ; FAA (OPS) ; Juneau, AK Gary V. Sterns ; FAA (A/W) ; Juneau , AK
Note:	