



Aviation Investigation Preliminary Report

Location:	McGrath, AK	Accident Number:	ANC24FA085
Date & Time:	August 31, 2024, 10:00 Local	Registration:	N7154Z
Aircraft:	Piper PA-18-150	Injuries:	
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Business		

On August 31, 2024, about 1000 Alaska daylight time, a Piper PA-18-150 airplane, N7154Z, sustained substantial damage when it was involved in an accident near McGrath Alaska. The pilot was fatally injured. The airplane was operated as a *Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91 flight.

The airplane departed from a remote hunting base camp at about 0930 and traveled to a 2,500 ft. ridge about 2.5 miles away to drop off supplies to his hunting guide; the pilot was planning to continue to McGrath for fuel. According to the guide, the airplane flew over their camp several times before flying further up the ridge and executed several slow and low passes of the ridge in an X pattern likely trying to determine wind and landing conditions. The pilot had landed on this ridge many times over the years, but this was the first landing of the season.

The guide reported the winds to be about 15 mph from the northeast and good visibility. The guide said the airplane was traveling slow and low level on a southwest heading and was beginning a right turn to the northeast. As the airplane began what the guide thought to be a right base to final turn, he lost site of the airplane, however, he could still hear the engine. He reported hearing the engine call for a lot of power twice and about 30 seconds later he heard the airplane impact the ground. The guide approached the accident and found the pilot unconscious and shortly thereafter succumbed to his injuries. The Alaska Air National Guard team arrived at the accident site via helicopter later that day.

The National Transportation Safety Board investigator-in-charge traveled with the Alaska State Troopers to the remote crash site on September 1. The airplane was found nosed down, in a near vertical attitude, on a northeast heading on the south side of the ridge. The wings remained partially attached and the tail was bent slightly to the right. See figure 1



Figure 1. Wreckage of N7154Z at accident site. (NTSB Photo)

Control cable continuity from the ailerons, flaps and rudder were intact to the fuselage, and fuel was present in the fuel lines.

The airplane wreckage has been recovered from the remote site, a detailed postaccident examination of the airframe and engine will be accomplished.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N7154Z
Model/Series:	PA-18-150	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Amateur Built:			
Operator:	Cary L Foster	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Designator Code:			

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	VMC	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	PAMC,338 ft msl	Observation Time:	09:53 Local
Distance from Accident Site:	61 Nautical Miles	Temperature/Dew Point:	10°C /7°C
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	5 knots / , 360°
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility:	10 miles
Altimeter Setting:	29.73 inches Hg	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Departure Point:	Remote base camp airstrip, AK	Destination:	McGrath, AK

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	N/A	Latitude, Longitude:	62.008135,-154.80312

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Joyce, Stacia
Additional Participating Persons:	Chris Pysz; FAA; Anchorage, AK Mark Platt; Lycoming; Phoenix, AZ Sean Holloway; Piper; Vero Beach, FL
Investigation Class:	Class 3
Note:	