

Aviation Investigation Preliminary Report

Location:	Saint Mary's, AK	Accident Number:	ANC24FA094
Date & Time:	September 15, 2024, 22:04 Local	Registration:	N90193
Aircraft:	Cessna 207	Injuries:	4 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

On September 15, 2024, about 2204 Alaska daylight time, a Cessna 207 airplane, N90193, was destroyed when it was involved in an accident near St. Mary's, Alaska. The pilot and three passengers were fatally injured. The flight was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) Part 91 personal flight.

According to the operator, Yute Commuter Service, the airplane was reportedly being used by two employees for a personal flight at the time of the accident. Management personnel reported that the accident airplane was currently only being used for Part 91 operations since the engine had exceeded the manufacturers time before overhaul requirement. These Part 91 operations included company flight training and repositioning flights.

The accident pilot, who was the assistant chief pilot for the operator, along with another company pilot, a former pilot for the operator, and a fourth passenger, intended to fly from Bethel Airport (BET), Bethel, Alaska, to St. Mary's Airport (KSM), St. Mary's, Alaska, for a moose hunt.

According to the flight tracking service used by the operator, the airplane departed BET about 2108 and proceeded to the northwest to KSM between 500 and 800 ft above ground level (agl). At 2159, the airplane was about 4 nautical miles southeast of the KSM airport and about 180 ft agl over the Yukon River. The airplane continued north toward the airport, overflew the west side of runway 6/24, then maneuvered to the west of the airport. The airplane then made a left 180° turn and overflew runway 6/24 about 200 ft agl. The airplane turned right and proceeded south, then made a steep right descending turn toward the ground. The final recorded point was above the accident site (See figure 1).

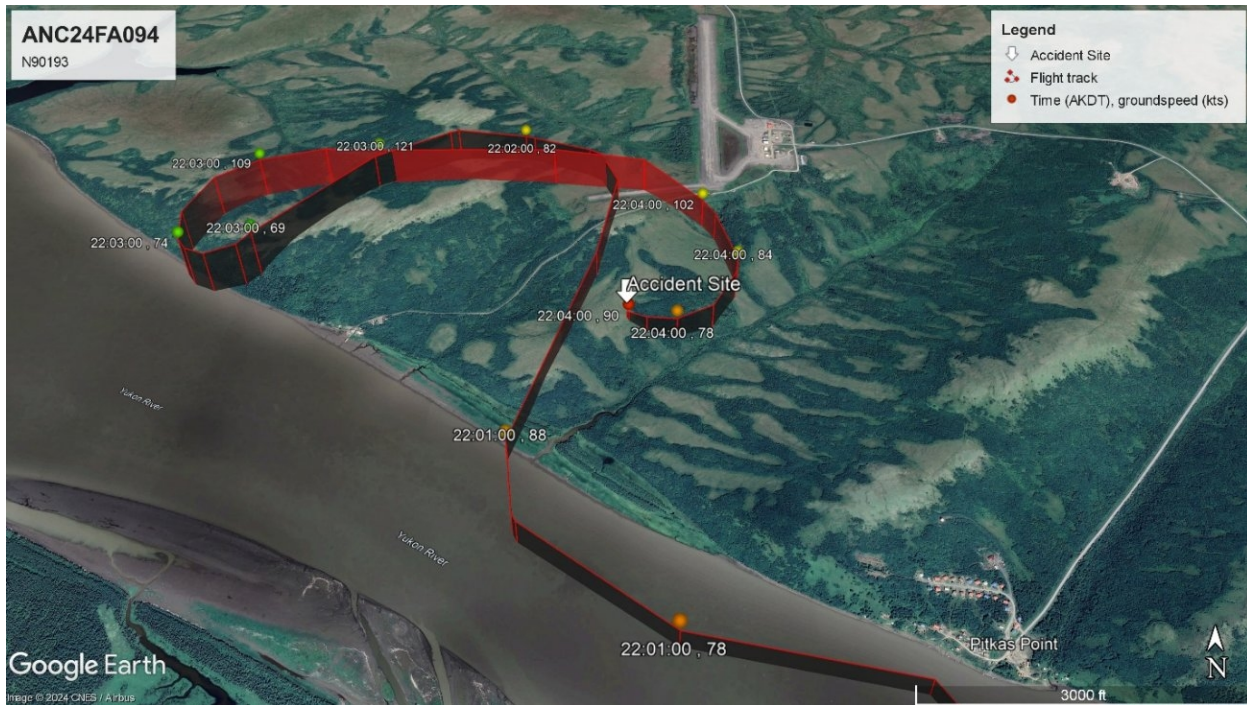


Figure 1. Accident flight track near St. Mary's Airport overlaid on Google Earth.

According to the operator, the accident airplane was equipped with Automatic Dependent Surveillance–Broadcast (ADS–B), which provides aircraft position information via satellite navigation or other sensors and periodically broadcasts it, enabling the aircraft to be tracked. The information can be received by air traffic control ground stations as a replacement for secondary surveillance radar, as no interrogation signal is needed from the ground. However, no ADS-B data was received from the accident airplane, during the accident flight.

According to archived Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) air traffic control radio communications, the accident pilot contacted the Anchorage Air Route Traffic Control Center (ARTCC) controller on-duty when the airplane was about 10 miles southwest of KSM and requested a special visual flight rules (SVFR) clearance to enter the KSM airport environment. The ARTCC controller subsequently provided the current weather conditions and issued the pilot a SVFR clearance.

At 2155, the ARTCC controller instructed the pilot to change to the KSM airport advisory frequency and to report canceling the SVFR clearance once on the ground at KSM.

At 2235, about 25 minutes after the facility-estimated arrival time at the airport, the controller attempted to contact the airplane with no response. An alert notice (ALNOT) was issued at 2300 for the overdue airplane.

At 2156, KSM automated weather reported wind from 280° at 13 knots, visibility 2 1/2 miles with light rain and mist, ceiling overcast at 300 ft agl, temperature and dew point 8° Celsius (C) (46°F), altimeter setting 29.30 inches of mercury. Remarks: automated system with a

precipitation discriminator, visibility 1 mile variable 5 miles, rain began at 2103 AKDT, hourly precipitation 0.01 inches, 6-hour rainfall 0.7 inches, temperature 7.8°C, dew point 7.8°C, 6-hour maximum temperature 8.9C, 6-hour minimum temperature 7.8C, 3-hour pressure tendency risen 3.7-hPa.

The sunset at KSM occurred at 2110 and civil twilight ended and 2155.

On the day of the accident, another company airplane departed BET on a scheduled 14 *CFR* Part 135 flight to KSM. According to the flight track data, the airplane arrived near KSM at 2128 and departed the area about 2135 without landing, and then returned to Bethel. The pilot of the airplane reported that weather conditions along the flight route to KSM were “going up and down a lot,” and the visibility went up to 10 miles at one point, but as they got closer to KSM, it was about 1 ¼ miles. Due to the weather, he turned around to return to Bethel, but then KSM went back up to 4 miles visibility. He turned back to KSM and requested a SVFR clearance from ARTCC. After receiving the clearance, the KSM visibility went down to ½ mile. As he approached KSM, he could see the hills surrounding the airport and Pitkas Point but could not see the runway environment; KSM appeared completely “fogged in,” so he canceled the SVFR approach and returned to BET. He added that the long runway 17/35 was closed at the time and the lights on runway 6/24 (the shorter runway) were inoperative. Since the wind was favoring runway 24, he had planned to land on the shorter runway. During his first attempt to land at KSM, he didn’t see any runways or the airport at all. During the approach, he could only see the surrounding hills and Pitkas Point, but not the runways or lights. He did attempt to activate the pilot-controlled runway lights for runway 17/35, but due to the reduced visibility he never saw the lights, the airport beacon, or any part of the runway environment at all.

A senior National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigator-in-charge (IIC), along with an FAA aviation airworthiness inspector, and an air safety investigator from Textron Aviation, responded to the accident site and examined the airplane wreckage on September 18. During the detailed on-scene examination, the investigative team documented the wreckage before recovery efforts began.

The NTSB on-scene wreckage examination revealed that the airplane impacted rising terrain in a right wing low and nose low attitude on a northwest heading. The highly fragmented debris path was about 150 ft long and contained all major components of the airplane (See figure 2).



Figure 2. A view of the airplane wreckage at the accident site facing north (Courtesy of FAA). The airplane wreckage was recovered for the accident site and transported to Wasilla, Alaska, and a detailed NTSB examination is pending.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Cessna	Registration:	N90193
Model/Series:	207	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Amateur Built:			
Operator:	PAKLOOK Air Inc	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	Commuter air carrier (135)
Operator Designator Code:			

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	IMC	Condition of Light:	Night
Observation Facility, Elevation:	PASM,312 ft msl	Observation Time:	21:56 Local
Distance from Accident Site:	1 Nautical Miles	Temperature/Dew Point:	8°C / 8°C
Lowest Cloud Condition:		Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	13 knots / , 280°
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 300 ft AGL	Visibility:	2.5 miles
Altimeter Setting:	29.3 inches Hg	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Departure Point:	Bethel, AK (BET)	Destination:	Saint Mary's, AK

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	3 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	4 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	62.045783,-163.30887

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Lindberg, Joshua
Additional Participating Persons:	Toni Toth; FAA; Anchorage, AK PJ Beavers; Textron Aviation; Wichita, KS Jeremy Powers; Yute Commuter Service; Bethel, AK Alex Munro; Yute Commuter Service; Bethel, AK
Investigation Class:	Class 3
Note:	