
Runway excursion on landing involving a Douglas DC-6B at an alpine airstrip north of Nuiqsut, Alaska, on September 25, 2001

Micro-summary: Runway excursion on landing involving this Douglas DC-6.

Event Date: 2001-09-25 at 1609 ADT

Investigative Body: National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), USA

Investigative Body's Web Site: <http://www.nts.gov/>

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		NTSB ID: ANC01LA146		Aircraft Registration Number: N867TA	
		Occurrence Date: 09/25/2001		Most Critical Injury: Minor	
		Occurrence Type: Accident		Investigated By: NTSB	
Location/Time					
Nearest City/Place Nuiqsut	State AK	Zip Code 99879	Local Time 1609	Time Zone ADT	
Airport Proximity: On Airport		Distance From Landing Facility:		Direction From Airport:	
Aircraft Information Summary					
Aircraft Manufacturer Douglas		Model/Series DC-6B		Type of Aircraft Airplane	
Sightseeing Flight: No			Air Medical Transport Flight: No		
Narrative					
<p>Brief narrative statement of facts, conditions and circumstances pertinent to the accident/incident:</p> <p>On September 25, 2001, about 1609 Alaska daylight time, a Douglas DC-6B airplane, N867TA, sustained substantial damage during landing at the Alpine Airstrip, located about 10 miles north of Nuiqsut, Alaska. The airplane was being operated as a visual flight rules (VFR) cargo flight under Title 14, CFR Part 121, when the accident occurred. The airplane was registered to and operated by Northern Air Cargo, Inc., Anchorage, Alaska. The two certificated airline transport pilots, and the flight engineer, sustained minor injuries. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and an instrument flight rules (IFR) flight plan was in effect. The flight originated at the Deadhorse Airport, Deadhorse, Alaska, about 1530.</p> <p>During a telephone conversation with the National Transportation Safety Board investigator-in-charge on September 26, the director of operations for the operator reported that both of the pilots were certificated and type-rated in the accident airplane. He added that the first pilot, seated in the right seat, was one of the company's senior check airman, and possessed a right seat dependency endorsement. The second pilot, seated in the left seat, had less experience in the DC-6B airplane. The director of operations reported that prior to departure, both pilots had previously agreed that the second pilot would fly the leg of the flight on which the accident occurred.</p> <p>During a telephone conversation with the National Transportation Safety Board investigator-in-charge on September 27, the first pilot related that the purpose of the flight was to deliver about 20,000 pounds of oil drilling equipment to a remote oil production site. He reported that light snow showers were present, with visibility reported at 4 miles. The first pilot stated that during final approach, as the airplane passed over the airstrip threshold, a higher than normal sink rate was encountered. He said that the initial touchdown was "firm," but was thought to be within acceptable tolerances. Just after touchdown, the left wing broke free from the airplane at the wing to fuselage attach point. The airplane veered to the left, continued off the left side of the 5,000 feet long by 100 feet wide runway, down an embankment, and came to rest in an area of wet, tundra-covered terrain. A postcrash fire ensued, heavily damaging the center section of the fuselage.</p> <p>According to information recorded on the airplane's cockpit voice recorder (CVR), at 1552, prior to leaving their cruise altitude, the crew contacted the contract weather observer at the Alpine Airstrip, and requested current weather conditions. The weather observer responded, in part: "Ah currently visibility four miles with light snow and mist. Overcast one thousand two hundred. Temp minus three. Dew point missing."</p> <p>At 1555, the second pilot briefed the first pilot and flight engineer on the anticipated GPS approach to runway 21, and included information concerning the missed approach procedures.</p> <p>At 1558, Anchorage Air Route Traffic Control Center (ARTCC) cleared the accident airplane for the</p>					
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National Transportation Safety Board

FACTUAL REPORT

AVIATION

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runway GPS 21 approach to the Alpine Airstrip, and advised the crew to contact the Alpine Common Traffic Advisory Frequency (CTAF) on 122.8.

At 1559, the crew contacted the contact weather observer on 122.8, and stated: "Alpine, Yukon six ninety, we're ah...ah ten minuets out... and we'll be landing runway two one." The contract weather observer acknowledged by stating: "Yukon six ninety this is Alpine ah your runway is clear, winds still currently ah two six zero, right at twelve knots, altimeter two niner five niner."

Between 1600:15 and 1606:25, the flight progressed in accordance with the published approach plate.

At 1606:35, the second pilot asked: "What are we landing... about one twenty three, one ten, something like that?" The flight engineer responds by saying: "Sounds good."

At 1606:40, the first pilot tells the second pilot: "Pull the power back to go down."

At 1607:12, the second pilot asks: "What do we have for landing speeds?"

At 1607:15, the flight engineer responds: "One twenty three, one ten."

At 1607:25, the first pilot states: "(Expletive) you're two miles from it. Where in the (expletive) is it? Take it down. I don't see the (expletive) yet.

At 1607:53, the first pilot states: " You're only one mile from it." "Take it on down ah three."

At 1608:31, the flight engineer states: "Lights right there."

At 1608:32, the second pilot says: "Okay, full flaps, final gear check." The flight engineer responds by saying: "Gear checks. Three wheels. Pressure quality. Before landing complete."

At 1608:49, the first pilot says: "Keep that, keep that (expletive) power off."

At 1608:51, the first pilot stated: "Just push forward on the nose."

At 1608:55, sound of impact, and end of recording.

A complete transcript of the CVR is included in this report.

The GPS 21 approach to runway 21 at the Alpine Airstrip is a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) approved, private GPS approach, owned and operated by Phillips Petroleum, Inc. The FAA approved approach plate for the GPS 21 approach, while inbound on the 206 degree radial, allows airplanes to descend to 400 feet msl (383 feet agl) until the runway environment is observed, or until reaching the missed approach point, 0.7 miles from the runway. The minimum visibility required for the approach is 1 statute mile.

On September 25, at 1609, the contract weather observer located at the accident airstrip was reporting: Wind, 290 degrees (true) at 12 knots; visibility, 3 statute miles in light snow and mist; clouds and sky condition, 1,000 feet overcast; temperature, 28 degrees F; dew point, missing; altimeter, 29.59 inHg. In the remarks portion of his report, the weather observer reported lower conditions to the north-northeast, and visibility of 1 statute mile.

The Safety Board did not take custody of the airplane wreckage. The airplane's solid-state CVR was retained by Safety Board's Vehicle Recorders Division in Washington, D.C., and will be returned to the operator at a later date.

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Landing Facility/Approach Information					
Airport Name Alpine Airstrip	Airport ID: PALP	Airport Elevation 17 Ft. MSL	Runway Used 21	Runway Length 5000	Runway Width 100
Runway Surface Type: Gravel					
Runway Surface Condition: Snow--wet					
Type Instrument Approach: Global Positioning System					
VFR Approach/Landing: Full Stop					
Aircraft Information					
Aircraft Manufacturer Douglas		Model/Series DC-6B		Serial Number 45202	
Airworthiness Certificate(s): Transport					
Landing Gear Type: Retractable - Tricycle					
Homebuilt Aircraft? No	Number of Seats: 5	Certified Max Gross Wt. 103800 LBS	Number of Engines: 4		
Engine Type: Reciprocating	Engine Manufacturer: P&W	Model/Series: R-2800-CB3	Rated Power: 2400 HP		
- Aircraft Inspection Information					
Type of Last Inspection Continuous Airworthiness	Date of Last Inspection 08/2001	Time Since Last Inspection 66 Hours	Airframe Total Time 70754 Hours		
- Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT) Information					
ELT Installed? Yes	ELT Operated? Yes	ELT Aided in Locating Accident Site? No			
Owner/Operator Information					
Registered Aircraft Owner Northern Air Crago, Inc.		Street Address 3900 West International Airport Road			
		City Anchorage	State AK	Zip Code 99502	
Operator of Aircraft Same as Reg'd Aircraft Owner		Street Address Same as Reg'd Aircraft Owner			
		City	State	Zip Code	
Operator Does Business As:			Operator Designator Code: NACA		
- Type of U.S. Certificate(s) Held:					
Air Carrier Operating Certificate(s): Flag Carrier/Domestic					
Operating Certificate: Large Aircraft Operator			Operator Certificate:		
Regulation Flight Conducted Under: Part 121: Air Carrier					
Type of Flight Operation Conducted: Non-scheduled; Domestic; Cargo					
FACTUAL REPORT - AVIATION					

 <p>National Transportation Safety Board FACTUAL REPORT AVIATION</p>	NTSB ID: ANC01LA146
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First Pilot Information

Name On File	City On File	State On File	Date of Birth On File	Age 52
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Sex: M	Seat Occupied: Right	Principal Profession: Civilian Pilot	Certificate Number: On File
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Certificate(s): Airline Transport

Airplane Rating(s): Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land; Single-engine Sea

Rotorcraft/Glider/LTA: None

Instrument Rating(s): Airplane

Instructor Rating(s): None

Type Rating/Endorsement for Accident/Incident Aircraft? Yes	Current Biennial Flight Review? 09/2001
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Medical Cert.: Class 1	Medical Cert. Status: Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim.	Date of Last Medical Exam: 06/2001
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- Flight Time Matrix	All A/C	This Make and Model	Airplane Single Engine	Airplane Multi-Engine	Night	Instrument		Rotorcraft	Glider	Lighter Than Air
						Actual	Simulated			
Total Time	22000	14000			4000	2640	1200			
Pilot In Command(PIC)	15000	8000				1800	900			
Instructor		1100								
Last 90 Days	117	117				14				
Last 30 Days	50	50				6	2			
Last 24 Hours	5	5				1				

Seatbelt Used? Yes	Shoulder Harness Used? No	Toxicology Performed? No	Second Pilot? Yes
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Flight Plan/Itinerary

Type of Flight Plan Filed: IFR

Departure Point Deadhorse	State AK	Airport Identifier PASC	Departure Time 1544	Time Zone ADT
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Destination Same as Accident/Incident Location	State	Airport Identifier PALP	
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Type of Clearance: IFR

Type of Airspace: Class E

Weather Information

Source of Briefing: Company; National Weather Service

Method of Briefing: Aircraft Radio

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Weather Information					
WOF ID	Observation Time	Time Zone	WOF Elevation	WOF Distance From Accident Site	Direction From Accident Site
PALP	1609	ADT	Ft. MSL	NM	Deg. Mag.
Sky/Lowest Cloud Condition:				Ft. AGL	Condition of Light: Day
Lowest Ceiling: Overcast		1000 Ft. AGL		Visibility: 3 SM	Altimeter: 29.59 "Hg
Temperature: -2 °C	Dew Point: °C	Wind Direction: 290		Density Altitude: Ft.	
Wind Speed: 12	Gusts:	Weather Conditions at Accident Site: Visual Conditions			
Visibility (RVR): Ft.	Visibility (RVV) SM	Intensity of Precipitation: Light			
Restrictions to Visibility: Fog					
Type of Precipitation: Snow					

Accident Information		
Aircraft Damage: Substantial	Aircraft Fire: Ground	Aircraft Explosion: None

Classification: U.S. Registered/U.S. Soil					
- Injury Summary Matrix	Fatal	Serious	Minor	None	TOTAL
First Pilot			1		1
Second Pilot			1		1
Student Pilot					
Flight Instructor					
Check Pilot					
Flight Engineer			1		1
Cabin Attendants					
Other Crew					
Passengers					
- TOTAL ABOARD -			3		3
Other Ground					
- GRAND TOTAL -			3		3

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Administrative Information

Investigator-In-Charge (IIC)

Clinton O. Johnson

Additional Persons Participating in This Accident/Incident Investigation:

James B Porter
Aviation Inspector
Federal Aviation Administration
6450 Airport Way #2
Fairbanks, AK 99709