



MEMORANDUM for RECORD

Millicent Hill
Air Safety Investigator
Alaska Region Aviation

Date: June 17, 2023
Person Contacted: Mark Gutsmedl
NTSB Accident Number: ANC23FA042

Mr. Gutsmedl provided the following regarding the accident.

- Mr. Gutsmedl stated he lived in Wisconsin and worked as an independent contractor guide. He had been out at the hunting camp from May 15 to June 16. He and another independent contractor guide were there with several different hunters/clients.
- He stated when they were ready to be flown out, they would text the pilot and he would arrange a time to pick them up. They had planned to leave on June 16 because the hunting season ended the night before.
- The night before they were up until about 0230 cleaning a bear, then contact the pilot about 0800 to arrange pickup.
- There were two different airstrips available to them depending on the wind. He had only been in and out of that airstrip with the accident pilot.
- The morning of the accident the pilot picked up the two hunters/clients and flew them to Unalakleet. When he returned, he told them he would take one of them and half of their gear.
- He stated they were talking and joking around while they loaded up the gear. He told the pilot the winds "were gusting and changing a lot" and increased about 5 mph during the hour they waited for the pilot's return. He stated he had flown with the pilot many times and had witnessed the pilot perform takeoffs and landings from the airstrip many times. He said he always trusted him, he was "such a good pilot."
- During previous departures, after takeoff, the airplane would dip below the airstrip off the departure end, out of sight, then climb back into view and out of the valley.
- He watched the initial portion of the downhill takeoff roll, and nothing appeared abnormal, so he turned away and did not watch the remainder of the takeoff. When he did not hear the engine noise during climb out or see the airplane climbing, he ran to the ridgeline's edge and saw the airplane had impacted the tundra 300 ft below the airstrip. He sent an SOS alert from his personal GPS tracker, then hiked down to the airplane to check for survivors.
- He stated when the pilot typically lined up a little right of center, pointed slightly left.

- He estimated the pilot was on the ground for about 15 to 20 minutes while they loaded up their gear.
- He said the pilot typically walks around the airstrip and “feels the air” he did not do that prior to the accident flight.



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Date: July 5, 2023
Person Contacted: Pablo Neira-Montoya
NTSB Accident Number: ANC23FA042

Mr. Neira-Montoya provided the following regarding the weather at the accident site.

- Mr. Neira-Montoya stated he was at the Unalakleet airport and was asked to respond to the accident site. He arrived on scene about 45 minutes later.
- He stated the winds in the area were “unusual” that day. Winds were variable, gusting 10 to 12 knots from the north, calmed, then gusted 5 knots from the south, and then the pattern repeated.
- He noted there were updrafts and downdrafts associated with the shifting winds.



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Date: July 5, 2023
Person Contacted: Clint Mayeur
NTSB Accident Number: ANC23FA042

Mr. Mayeur provided the following regarding the accident site.

- Mr. Mayeur stated he had flown to the same airstrip the accident pilot departed from. He was only out there one day, he completed three flights in that one day in the fall of 2022.
- The airstrip was located near a hunting site and was referred to as the “Major Ed” airstrip.
- He stated he was in a different type of airplane than the accident airplane.