

National Transportation Safety Board

Office of Aviation Safety

Washington, DC 20594



WPR22FA298

METEOROLOGY

Specialist's Factual Report

July 22, 2024

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A. ACCIDENT

Location: Blyn, Washington
Date: August 10, 2022
Time: 1459 Pacific daylight time
2159 coordinated universal time (UTC)
Airplane: Cirrus SR22; Registration: N379DH

B. METEOROLOGY SPECIALIST

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C. SUMMARY

On August 10, 2022, about 1459 Pacific daylight time (PDT), a Cirrus SR22, N379DH, was substantially damaged when it was involved in an accident near Blyn, Washington. The pilot was fatally injured. The airplane was operated as a *Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91* personal flight.

D. DETAILS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The National Transportation Safety Board's Senior Meteorologist was not on scene for this investigation and conducted the meteorology phase of the investigation remotely, collecting data from official National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Weather Service (NWS) sources including the Weather Prediction Center (WPC), and the National Center for Environmental Information (NCEI). This report documents the general weather products and forecasts over the region during the period and documents the pertinent meteorological parameters to the accident. All times are reported as PDT based upon the 24-hour clock, local time is -7 hours from UTC, and UTC=Z. Airport and NWS station identifiers use the standard International Civil Aviation Organization 4-letter station identifiers versus the International Air Transport Association 3-letter identifiers, which deletes the initial country code designator "K" for U.S. continental airports. Directions are referenced to true north and distances in nautical miles. Heights are in feet (ft) above

mean sea level (msl) unless otherwise noted. Visibility is in statute miles and fractions of statute miles.

The accident location was located at latitude 48.025685°N and longitude 122.94394°W, at an elevation of about 1,270 ft.

E. FACTUAL INFORMATION

1.0 Synoptic Conditions

The synoptic or large-scale migratory weather systems influencing the area were documented using standard NWS charts issued by the National Center for Environmental Prediction (NCEP) and the WPC located in College Park, Maryland. These are the base products used in describing weather features and in the creation of forecasts and warnings. Reference to these charts and other products can be found in the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) "Aviation Weather Handbook", FAA-H-8083-28¹.

1.1 Surface Analysis Chart

The NWS northwest section of the Surface Analysis Chart for 1400 PDT is included as figure 1 with the approximate accident site marked by the red star. The chart depicted a low-pressure system at 1011-hectopascals (hPa) over eastern Washington with a trough of low pressure extending north and south of the low. Another low-pressure system was located off the Washington Pacific coast with similar troughs extending north and south from the low. A mesoscale ridge of high pressure extended over western Washington between the two lows and over the area of the accident site.

¹ <https://www.faa.gov/regulationspolicies/handbooksmanuals/aviation/faa-h-8083-28-aviation-weather-handbook>

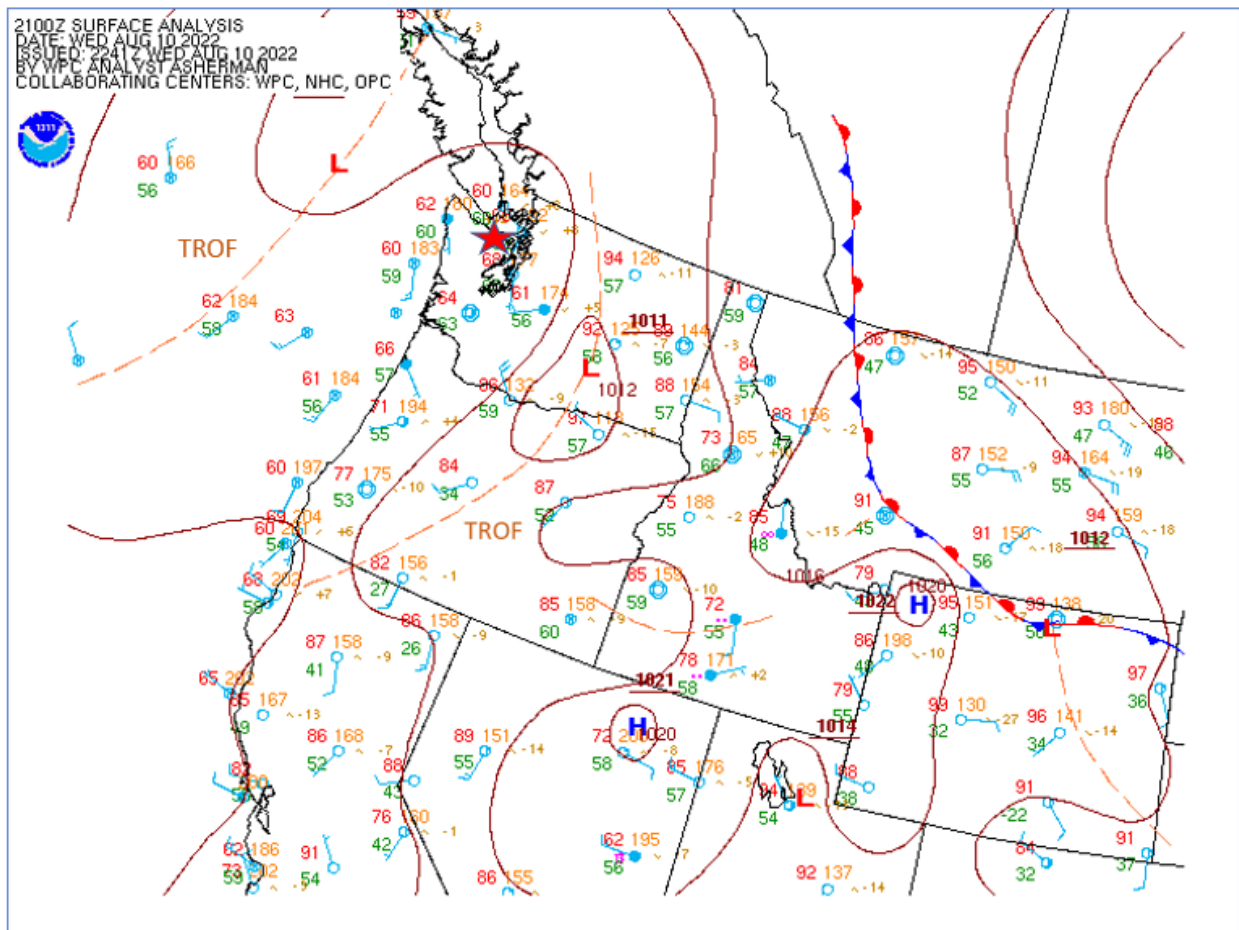


Figure 1 - NWS Surface Analysis Chart for 1400 PDT with the approximate accident site marked by the red star.

2.0 Surface Observations

The area was documented using official Aviation Routine Weather Reports (METAR²) and Aviation Select Special Weather Reports (SPECI). Cloud heights are reported above ground level (agl) in the following section, and the magnetic variation was estimated at 16° east based on the latest sectional chart for the area.

2.1 Friday Harbor, Washington

The accident airplane departed from Friday Harbor Airport (KFHR), Friday Harbor, WA at approximately 1445 PDT, which was located about 30 miles north of the accident site. The airport lists an elevation of 113 ft and had an Automated Surface Observation System (ASOS) whose observations were not augmented by any human

² METAR is an abbreviation for Meteorological Aerodrome Report, the international standard for reporting weather conditions.

observer and were issued hourly with specials as required. At the time of departure, the following conditions were reported.

Special weather observation for KFHR at 1439 PDT, automated, wind from 140° at 5 knots, visibility 9 miles, scattered clouds at 800 ft agl, ceiling overcast at 10,000 ft, temperature 16°C (61°F), dew point temperature 15°C (59°F), altimeter setting 30.05 inches of mercury (inHg). Remarks: automated observation system with a precipitation discriminator, temperature 16.1°C, dew point temperature 15.0°C.

The general flight categories³ and raw observations reported surrounding the period from 1145 through 1600 PDT were as follows, the observation decoded above is in bold type:

IFR METAR KFHR 101853Z AUTO 0000KT 8SM OVC005 16/14 A3001 RMK AO2 LTG DSNT E AND SE SLPNO T01560144=

IFR SPECI KFHR 101901Z AUTO 17004KT 8SM VCTS -RA OVC005 16/14 A3002 RMK AO2 LTG DSNT E AND SE RAB00 P0000 T01560144=

IFR SPECI KFHR 101921Z AUTO 22005KT 8SM -RA OVC006 16/15 A3003 RMK AO2 RAB00 P0000 T01610150=

IFR METAR KFHR 101953Z AUTO 20006KT 9SM -RA OVC006 17/16 A3003 RMK AO2 RAB00 CIG 005V011 SLPNO P0005 T01670156=

IFR METAR KFHR 102053Z AUTO VRB05KT 10SM OVC006 16/16 A3004 RMK AO2 RAE06 CIG 005V009 SLPNO P0001 60006 T01610156 53008=

IFR SPECI KFHR 102108Z AUTO VRB03KT 10SM OVC005 16/15 A3004 RMK AO2 T01610150=

MVFR SPECI KFHR 102127Z AUTO 12006KT 10SM SCT006 BKN010 OVC100 17/16 A3005 RMK AO2 T01670156=

VFR SPECI KFHR 102139Z AUTO 14005KT 9SM SCT008 OVC100 16/15 A3005 RMK AO2 T01610150=

Departure 2145Z

VFR METAR KFHR 102153Z AUTO 12004KT 10SM OVC100 16/14 A3005 RMK AO2 SLPNO

³ As defined by the NWS and the FAA Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM) section 7-1-7 defines the following general flight categories:

- Low Instrument Flight Rules (LIFR*) - ceiling below 500 ft agl and/or visibility less than 1 statute mile.
- Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) - ceiling between 500 to below 1,000 feet agl and/or visibility 1 to less than 3 miles.
- Marginal Visual Flight Rules (MVFR**) - ceiling from 1,000 to 3,000 ft agl and/or visibility 3 to 5 miles.
- Visual Flight Rules (VFR) - ceiling greater 3,000 ft agl and visibility greater than 5 miles.

* By definition, IFR is a ceiling less than 1,000 ft agl and/or visibility less than 3 miles while LIFR is a sub-category of IFR. ** MVFR is a subset of VFR.

T01610144=

VFR METAR KFHR 102253Z AUTO 12006KT 10SM FEW029 SCT100 18/14 A3006 RMK AO2 SLPNO
T01780144=

A review of the observations indicated that instrument flight rule conditions (IFR) and rain showers were reported in the hours prior to the accident and had only cleared to visual flight rule (VFR) conditions within the hour prior to the accident airplane's departure.

2.2 Port Townsend, Washington

The closest weather reporting location to the accident site was Jefferson County International Airport (KOS9), Port Townsend, WA, about 5.5 miles east-northeast of the accident site at an elevation of 110 ft. The airport had an Automated Weather Observation System (AWOS) which broadcasts locally line-of-sight on 119.025 VFH⁴ and disseminated observations longline every 20 minutes. At the time of the accident the following conditions were being reported:

Routine weather observation for KOS9 at 1455 PDT, automated, wind from 300° at 6 knots, visibility 10 statute mile or more, ceiling overcast at 800 ft agl, temperature 17° Celsius (C) (63° F), dew point temperature 15° C (59° F), altimeter setting 30.04 inches of mercury (inHg). Remarks: automated station with a precipitation discriminator.

The general flight categories and raw observations disseminated surrounding the period from 1300 through 1540 PDT were as follows.

MVFR METAR KOS9 102015Z AUTO 14007KT 10SM OVC011 19/17 A3002 RMK AO2

MVFR METAR KOS9 102035Z AUTO 15005KT 10SM OVC013 20/17 A3002 RMK AO2

MVFR METAR KOS9 102055Z AUTO 00000KT 10SM SCT008 OVC013 19/17 A3003 RMK AO2

IFR METAR KOS9 102115Z AUTO 35006KT 10SM OVC009 19/17 A3003 RMK AO2

IFR METAR KOS9 102135Z AUTO VRB05KT 10SM OVC008 17/15 A3004 RMK AO2

***IFR* METAR KOS9 102155Z AUTO 30006KT 10SM OVC008 17/15 A3004 RMK AO2**

Accident 2200Z

IFR METAR KOS9 102215Z AUTO 33005KT 10SM OVC008 17/15 A3004 RMK AO2

⁴ Very high frequency (VHF) common radio band used in civilian aviation communications and navigation.

IFR METAR KOS9 102235Z AUTO 33005KT 10SM OVC009 17/15 A3005 RMK AO2

2.3 Port Angeles, Washington

The next closest weather reporting station, located about 23 miles west-northwest of the accident site, was William R. Fairchild International Airport (KCLM), Port Angeles, which listed an elevation of 291 ft. The airport had an ASOS and was not augmented by any observers.

Weather observation at 1453 PDT, automated, wind from 260° at 8 knots, visibility 10 miles or more, ceiling overcast at 1,300 ft agl, temperature 19°C (67°F), dew point temperature 14°C (58°F), altimeter setting 30.06 inHg. Remarks: automated observation with a precipitation discriminator, sea level pressure 1017.9-hPa, temperature 19.4°C, dew point 14.4°C.

The general flight categories and raw observations surrounding the period were as follows:

*MVFR METAR KCLM 101853Z AUTO VRB03KT 10SM OVC011 18/14 A3003 RMK AO2 LTG DSNT NW
RAB03E24 SLP170 P0000 T01780139=*

*MVFR METAR KCLM 101953Z AUTO 28004KT 10SM OVC010 18/14 A3004 RMK AO2 SLP172
T01780139*

*MVFR METAR KCLM 102053Z AUTO 31006KT 10SM OVC013 19/14 A3005 RMK AO2 SLP176 60000
T01890144 53007=*

***MVFR METAR KCLM 102153Z AUTO 26008KT 10SM OVC013 19/14 A3006 RMK AO2 SLP179
T01940144=***

Accident 2200Z

*MVFR METAR KCLM 102253Z AUTO 28008KT 10SM BKN016 OVC033 19/14 A3007 RMK AO2
SLP183 T01890144=*

*VFR SPECI KCLM 102328Z AUTO 29007G16KT 10SM SCT017 OVC032 19/14 A3008 RMK AO2
T01890144=*

The airport reported MVFR conditions surrounding the period due to ceilings overcast between 1,000 and 1,300 ft agl and was reported as ceiling broken at 1,600 ft and overcast at 3,300 ft immediately after the accident.

2.4 NWS Aviation Weather Center's METAR Display

A depiction of the observations from the NWS Aviation Weather Center's Helicopter Emergency Medical Services (HEMS) METAR display for with the weather radar overlay is included as figure 2 with the accident site marked by the red star.

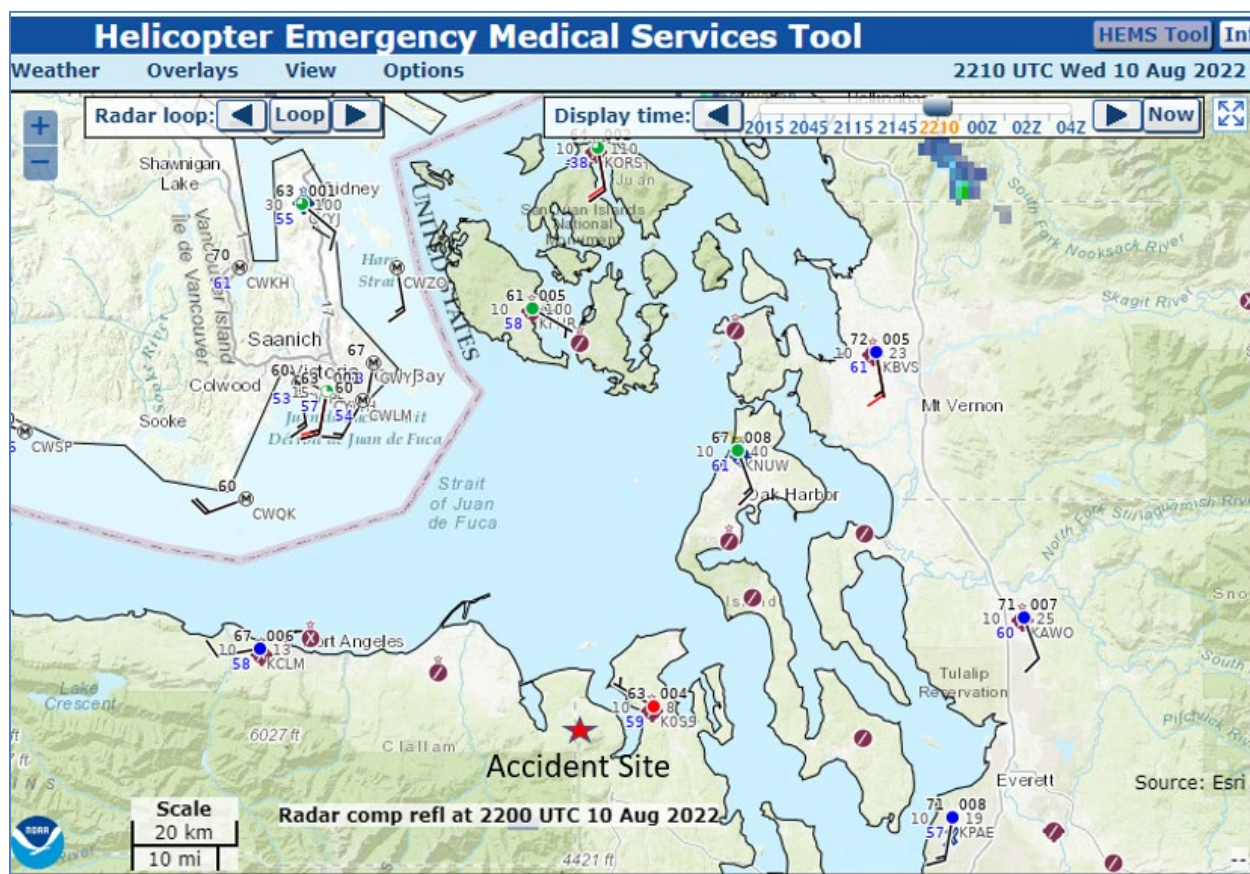


Figure 2 - NWS Aviation Weather Center's METAR display at 1510 PDT with weather radar overlaid and approximate accident site.

The display showed general VFR to MVFR conditions over the area with an area of IFR conditions in the vicinity of the accident site. The station models showed a generally diffluent wind pattern over the area with winds from the northwest in the vicinity of the accident site and from the southeast over the departure airport.

3.0 Sounding

High-Resolution Rapid Refresh (HRRR)⁵ numerical model data were obtained from the NOAA Air Resource Laboratory archive using the closest grid point to the

⁵ The HRRR is a NOAA real-time 3 kilometer (km) resolution, hourly-updated, cloud-resolving, convection-allowing atmospheric model, initialized by 3 km grids with 3 km radar assimilation. Radar data is assimilated in the HRRR every 15 minutes over a 1-hour period.

accident site coordinates. The HRRR model data was then plotted on a standard skew T log P diagram⁶ using the RAOB Analysis software⁷ for 1500 PDT (2200Z) and is included as figure 3.

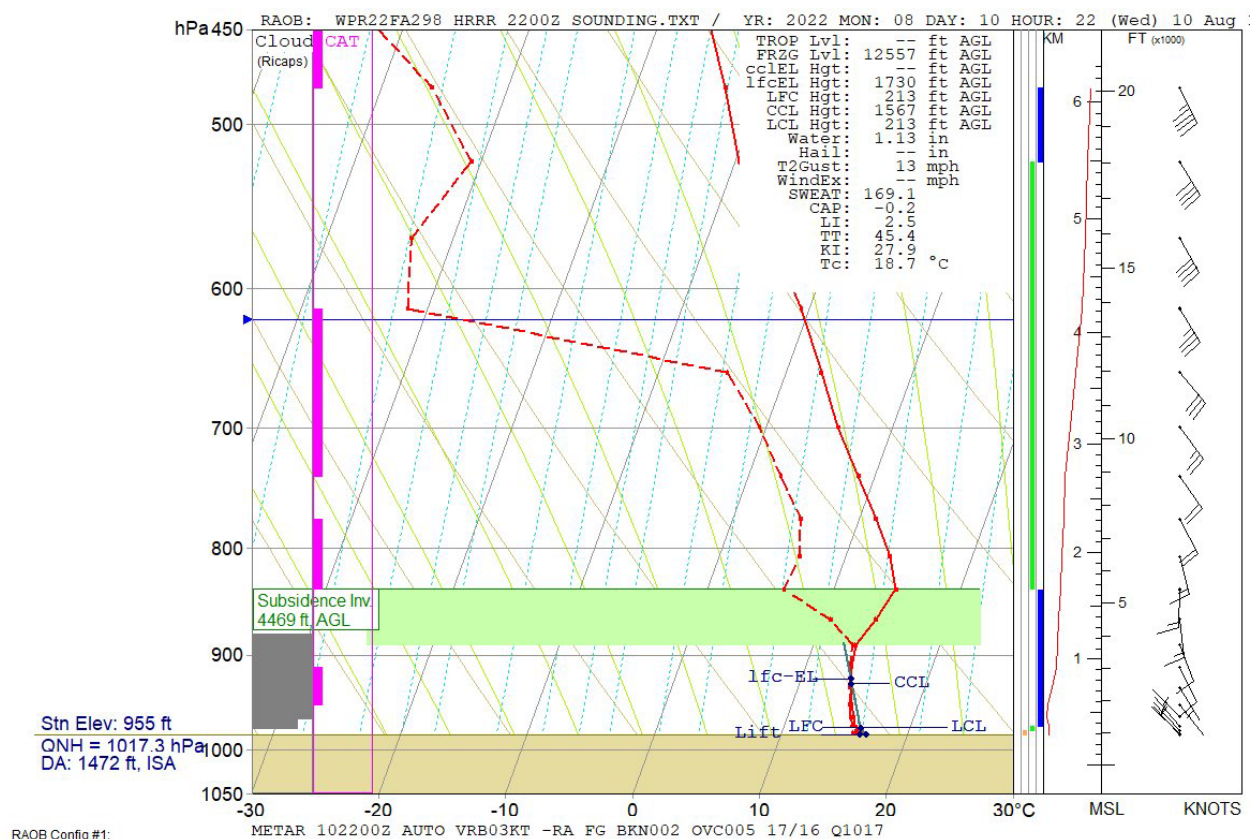


Figure 3 - HRRR numerical sounding for 1500 PDT over the approximate accident site.

The HRRR sounding indicated an elevation of 955 ft over the grid point with a near surface temperature of 16.7° C (62° F), a dew point temperature of 16.2° C (61° F), a relative humidity of 97%, with an approximate density altitude of 1,472 ft. The lifted condensation level (LCL) and level of free convection (LFC) were identified at 213 ft agl and represented the estimated cloud bases. The convective condensation level (CCL) was at 1,567 ft agl, and the precipitable water content was 1.13 inches. A temperature inversion was noted between 3,500 and 5,500 ft, where temperature increased with altitude with drier air above. The freezing level was identified at about 13,500 ft, well above the accident airplane's altitude. The RAOB Analysis program depicted broken to overcast layer of stratiform clouds from the LCL or from 200 ft agl through 4,000 ft (gray bar on left axis), with the relative humidity of 99% in that layer.

⁶ Skew T log P diagram - is a standard meteorological plot or thermodynamic diagram using temperature and the logarithmic of pressure as coordinates, used to display winds, temperature, dew point, and various indices used to define the vertical structure of the atmosphere.

⁷ RAOB -The Complete RAOBsonde OBServation program is an interactive sounding analysis program developed by Eosonde Research Services (ERS) previously known as Environmental Research Services, The Villages, Florida.

The HRRR wind profile indicated a surface wind from 320° at 3 knots and abruptly sheared to the south-southeast and increased in speed immediately above the inversion. The mean 0 to 6 km (or 18,000 ft) wind was from 150° at 27 knots.

A table of the HRRR parameters below 10,000 ft of height, pressure, temperature (T), dew point temperature (Td), relative humidity (RH), wind, and potential Clear Air Turbulence (CAT) intensity, Low-Level Wind Shear (LLWS) is included below.

Height (ft-msl)	Pres (hPa)	T (C)	Td (C)	RH (%)	Wind (deg/kts)	CAT (FAA)	LLWS (FAA)
955	983	16.7	16.2	97	319/ 3		
984	982	16.4	15.7	96	316/ 3		
1070	979	16.0	15.8	99	320/ 3		
1213	974	15.6	15.4	99	321/ 3		
1501	964	15.2	15.0	99	317/ 1		
1879	951	14.7	14.6	99	144/ 2	LGT	
2411	933	14.2	14.1	99	151/ 6	LGT	
3043	912	13.6	13.5	99	156/ 10		
3720	890	13.3	13.1	99	161/ 12		
4510	865	14.2	10.6	79	174/ 13		
5424	837	14.9	6.1	56	182/ 15	LGT	
6436	807	13.5	6.4	62	168/ 16	LGT	
7587	774	11.3	5.4	67	155/ 18		
8888	738	8.7	2.6	65	149/ 19	LGT	
10356	699	5.7	-0.5	64	146/ 24	LGT	

4.0 Satellite Imagery

The Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellite number 17 (GOES-17) infrared satellite data were obtained from an archive at the Space Science Engineering Center (SSEC) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in Madison, WI, and processed using the Man-computer Interactive Data Access System (McIDAS) software. The band 13 infrared imagery at a wavelength 10.3 μm with a spatial resolution of 2 kilometers (km) provided radiative brightness temperatures. The visible band 2 imagery provided a spatial resolution of 0.5 km.

The GOES-17 infrared and visibility images for 1456 PDT are included as figures 3 and 4, respectively. The images depicted clouds over the route and over the accident site with radiative cloud temperatures of 280 kelvin or 6.8° C, which corresponded to cloud tops near 9,000 ft based on the HRRR sounding.

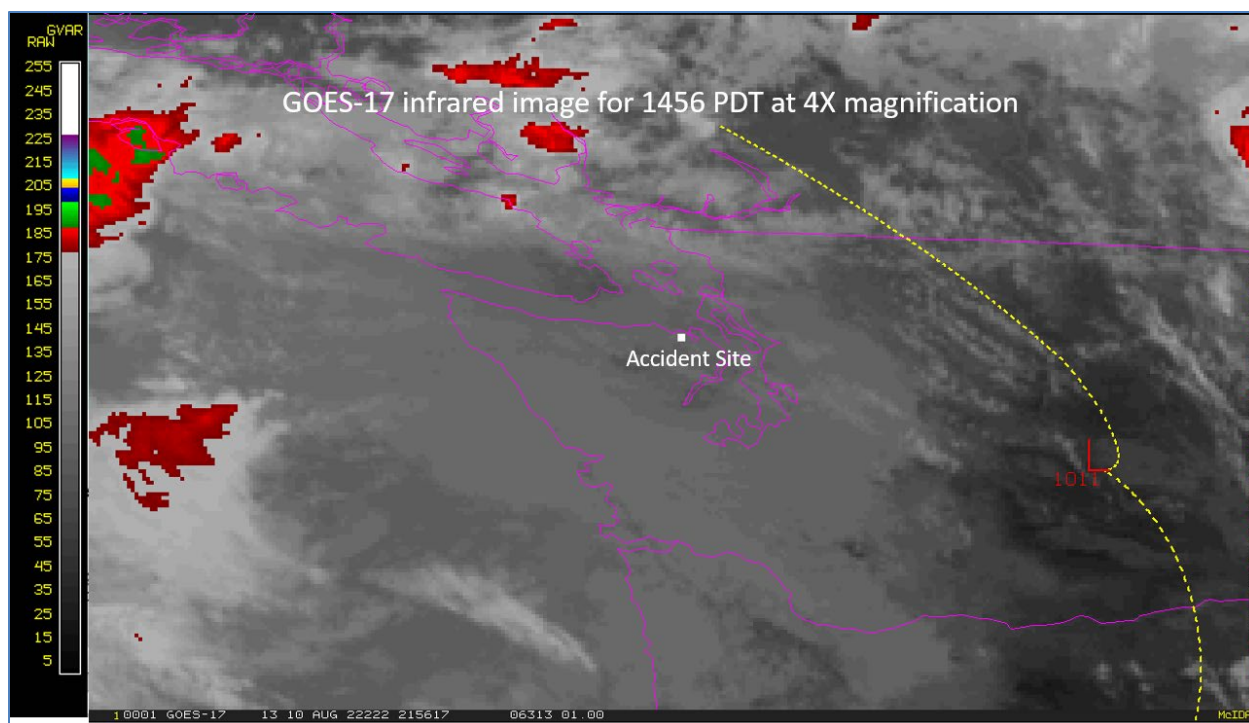


Figure 4 - GOES-17 infrared image for 1456 PDT at 4X magnification with a standard MB temperature enhancement curve applied with the accident site marked by white square.

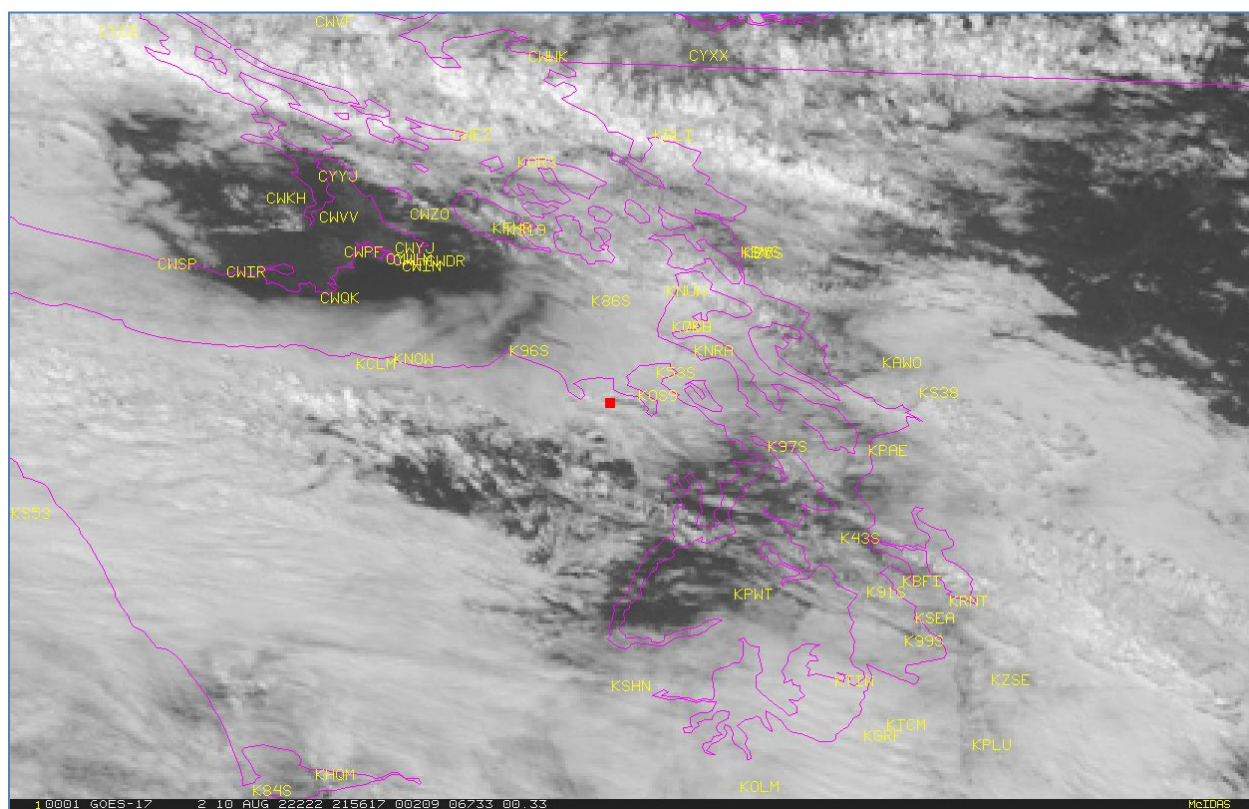


Figure 5 - GOES-17 visible image for 1456 PDT at 3X magnification with accident site marked by red square.

5.0 Weather Radar Imagery

The NWS NCEI National Composite Radar Mosaic for 1500 PDT was reviewed and the regional display over the accident documented in figure 6. The radar image depicted an area of echoes near 45 dBZ over Vancouver Island to the northwest of the accident site, with no significant weather echoes noted in the vicinity of the accident site.

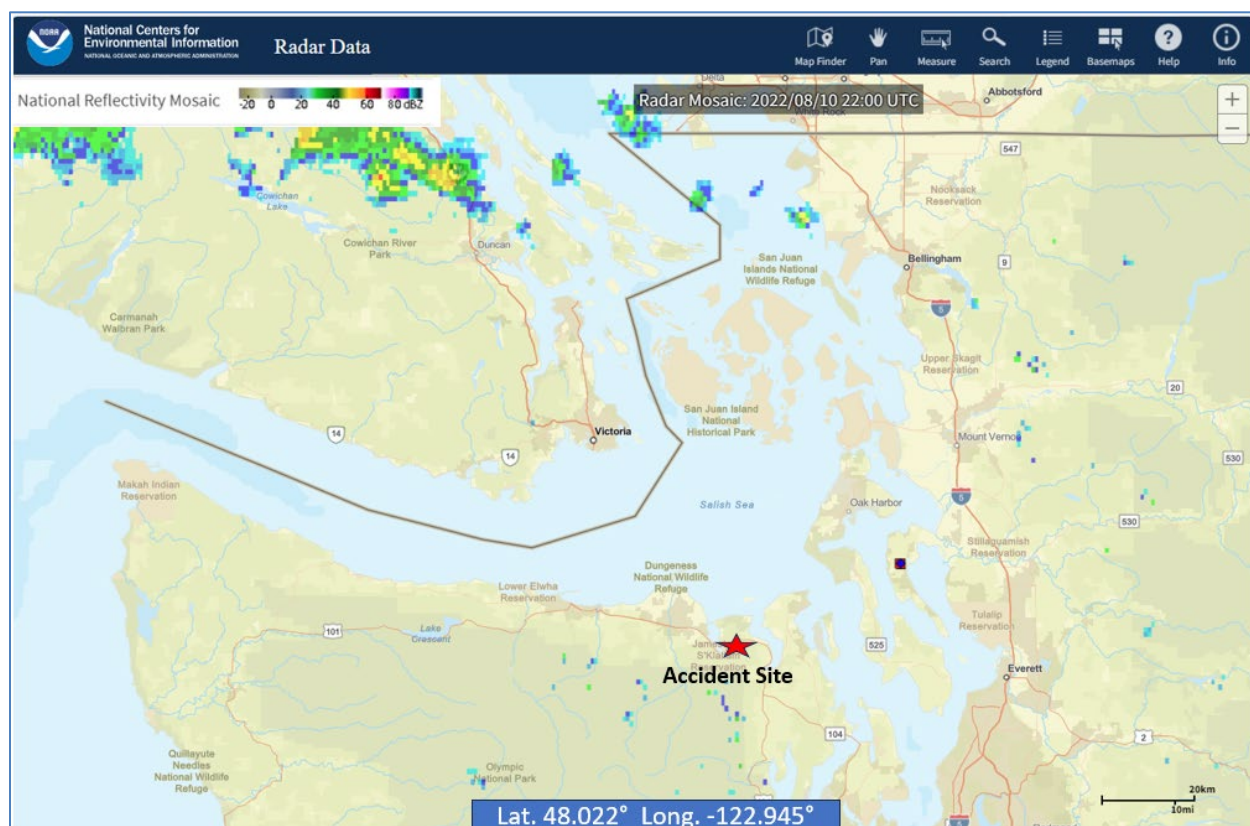


Figure 6 - NWS Regional Composite Radar Mosaic for 1500 PDT with the approximate accident site marked by the red star.

6.0 NWS Forecasts

The NWS Seattle (KSEW) Weather Forecast Office (WFO) was responsible for the local weather forecasts and weather warnings over the accident site. While the NWS AWC was responsible for the Graphic Forecast for Aviation documented below, and the issuance of inflight weather advisories.

6.1 Terminal Aerodrome Forecast

The closest Terminal Aerodrome Forecasts (TAF) to the accident site was for KCLM located about 23 miles west, and for Seattle Paine Field International Airport (KPAE) located 32 miles east. A TAF is only valid for a 5 mile radius of the airport's center point. Pilots and weather briefing systems will often review the closest TAF for a more specific breakdown in winds, visibility, clouds than other forecasts. The forecasts valid at the time of the accident were issued at 1028 PDT and were as follows:

TAF KCLM 271728Z 2718/2818 32006KT P6SM FEW050

FM280200 29008KT P6SM SCT050 BKN060

FM281000 28007KT P6SM BKN045

FM281200 34005KT P6SM OVC025=

TAF KPAE 271728Z 2718/2818 18008KT P6SM BKN009 OVC025

FM272000 20007KT P6SM OVC030

FM272100 22008KT P6SM BKN050

FM280100 35005KT P6SM BKN070

FM281100 08003KT P6SM OVC030

FM281200 09003KT 4SM BR OVC015=

6.2 Area Forecast Discussion

The NWS Area Forecast Discussions (AFD) are issued by each WFO to describe the short-term weather conditions within their region with an aviation section that includes the general conditions as it relates to the creation of the TAF. These are useful for additional aviation-related issues that cannot be encoded into the TAF and provide some reasoning behind the forecast. These are generated roughly every 6 hours and corresponds to the release of the latest TAFs for that office. The AFD issued by KSEW at 0851 PDT and was as follows:

FXUS66 KSEW 271551

AFDSEW

Area Forecast Discussion

National Weather Service Seattle WA

851 AM PDT Sat Aug 27 2022

.UPDATE...Made a few minor adjustments this morning to better match current satellite and radar trends. Water vapor imagery this morning shows a shortwave trough departing W WA, moving along the Canada/US border towards Alberta and northern MT. This shortwave trough carried a surface frontal system with it, which has also departed W WA to the east and resides near the E WA/ID border.

A weak convergence zone developed in the wake of the frontal passage last evening and has persisted this morning, mainly across Central and Eastern King and Snohomish Counties. A few showers also developed last evening over Skagit and Whatcom Counties

and have persisted this morning. Elsewhere, pockets of drizzle continue to impact portions of Puget Sound.

NW flow aloft will dominate the area in the wake of the shortwave trough, with high pressure in the low levels. Showers and convergence zone activity will diminish through the afternoon hours, with pockets of sunshine also returning. High temps similar to yesterday, trying to reach 70. Previous discussion follows with an updated marine and aviation section.

.AVIATION...A broad upper ridge will move over the area today and tonight with west to northwest flow aloft. At the surface, onshore flow will continue with high pressure offshore and lower pressure inland. The air mass will be stable with low level moisture.

Low clouds will remain fairly widespread across the region this morning, before ceilings lift to 4000-6000 feet most areas this afternoon with some spots possibly scattering out. A few areas of drizzle continue to persist this morning in a weak area of convergence across the central Sound. This may cause brief periods of reduced visibilities should it still drift in the vicinity of any area terminals this morning. Low clouds will fill in across parts of the area again later tonight and Sunday morning but they are not expected to be as extensive as this morning.

KSEA...Low clouds have started to lift this morning. MVFR conditions currently persist with a cloud deck between 1500-2000 feet at the terminal. Clouds should lift to a 5000-6000 foot late this morning and afternoon with some breaks possible by mid to late afternoon. Low clouds will probably reform late tonight. S/SW wind 8-12 knots will become N 4-8 knots late this afternoon or evening. 16/14

*.SEW WATCHES/WARNINGS/ADVISORIES...
WA...None.*

6.3 Graphic Forecast for Aviation

The NWS Graphic Forecast for Aviation (GFA) is a graphical depiction of surface wind, thunderstorms, precipitation, color-coded general flight categories, and cloud cover bases and tops reported in msl heights, from graphical output from the NWS National Digital Forecast Database (NDFD) with the Graphic-Airmen's Meteorological Information (G-AIRMET) for IFR conditions, mountain obscuration, icing conditions, and strong surface wind overlaid. The GFA provides a forecast for the enroute phase of flight and for locations without a TAF. The GFA is available at the NWS AWC website and through other weather briefing services. Figures 7 and 8 are the GFA 3-hour surface and cloud forecasts valid for 1400 PDT, and figures 9 and 10 are the GFA 6-hour forecasts valid for 1700 PDT current during the period.

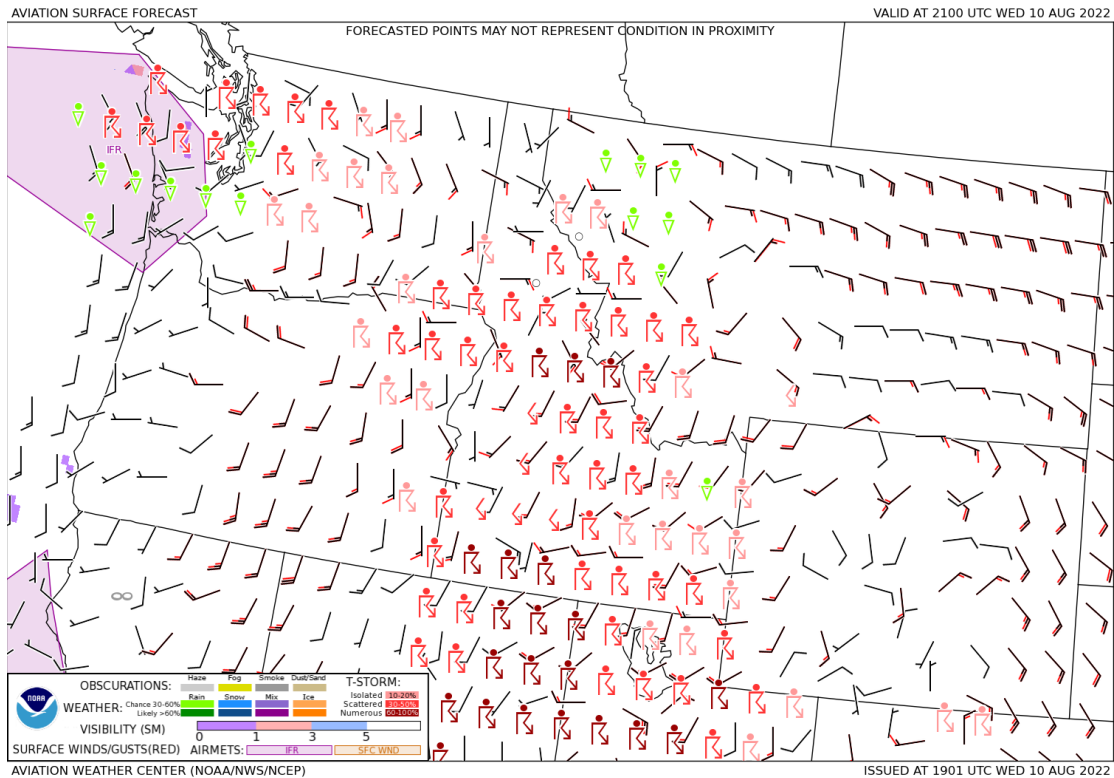


Figure 7 - NWS 3-hour Graphic Forecast for Aviation (GFA) Surface Forecast valid for 1400 PDT.

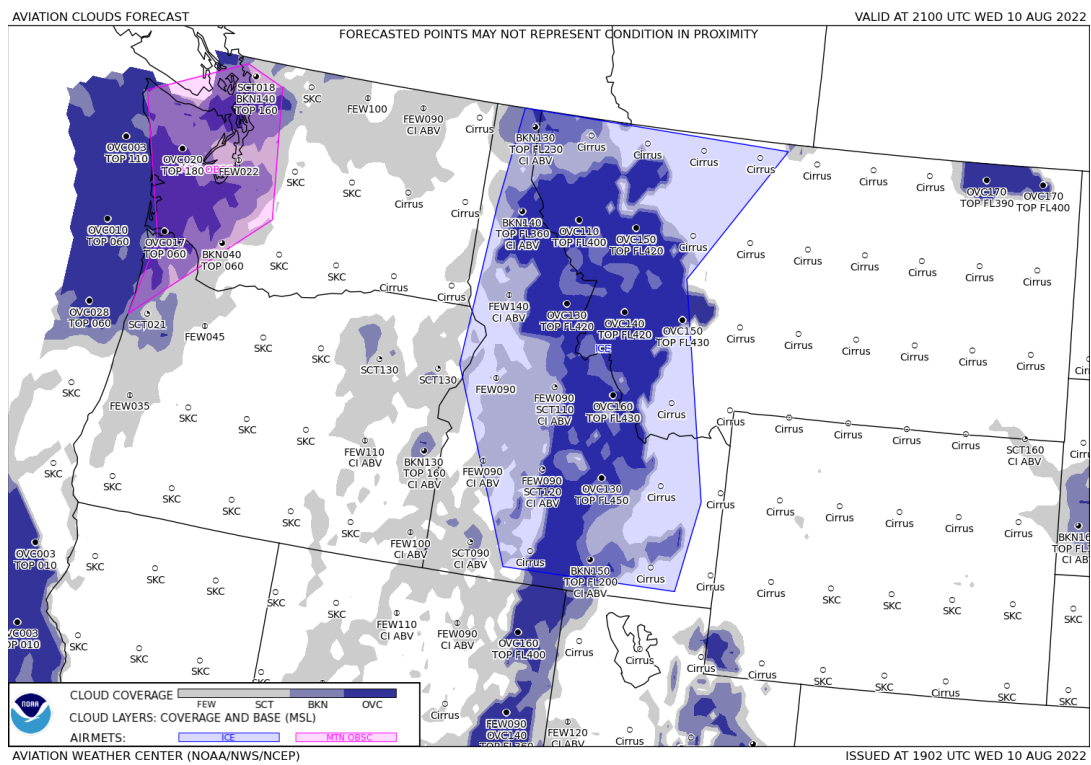


Figure 8 - NWS 3-hour Graphic Forecast for Aviation Cloud Forecast valid for 1400 PDT.

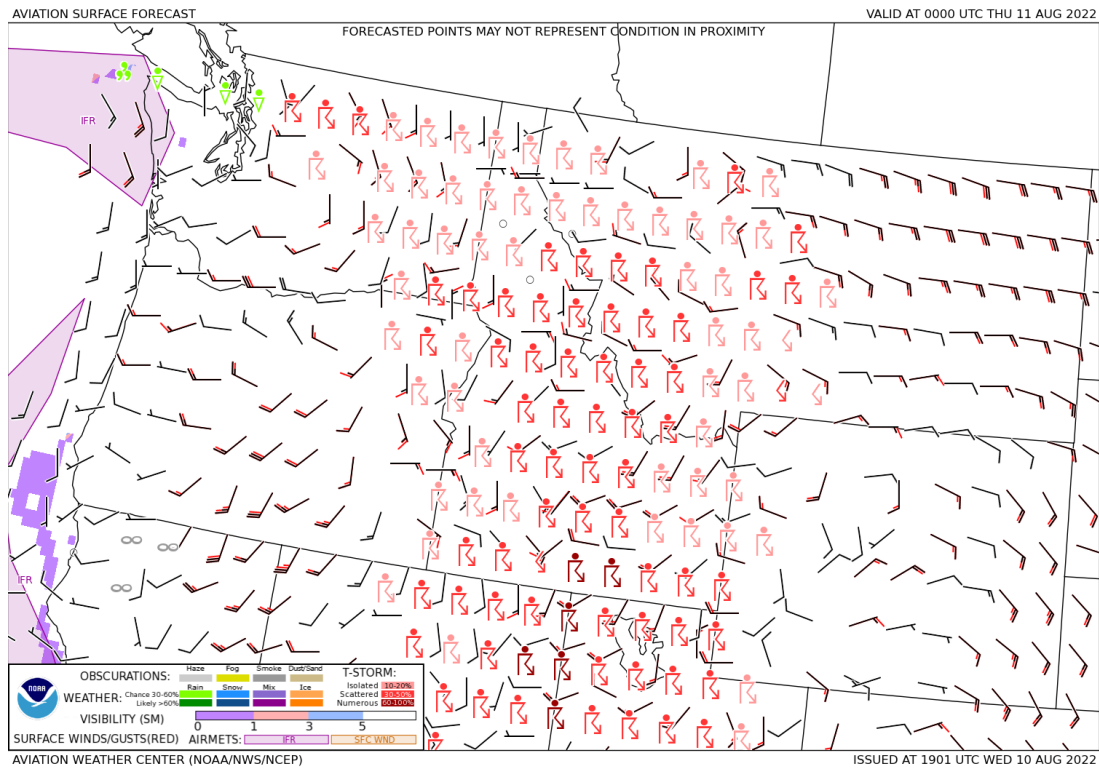


Figure 9 - NWS 6-hour Graphic Forecast for Aviation (GFA) Surface Forecast valid for 1700 PDT.

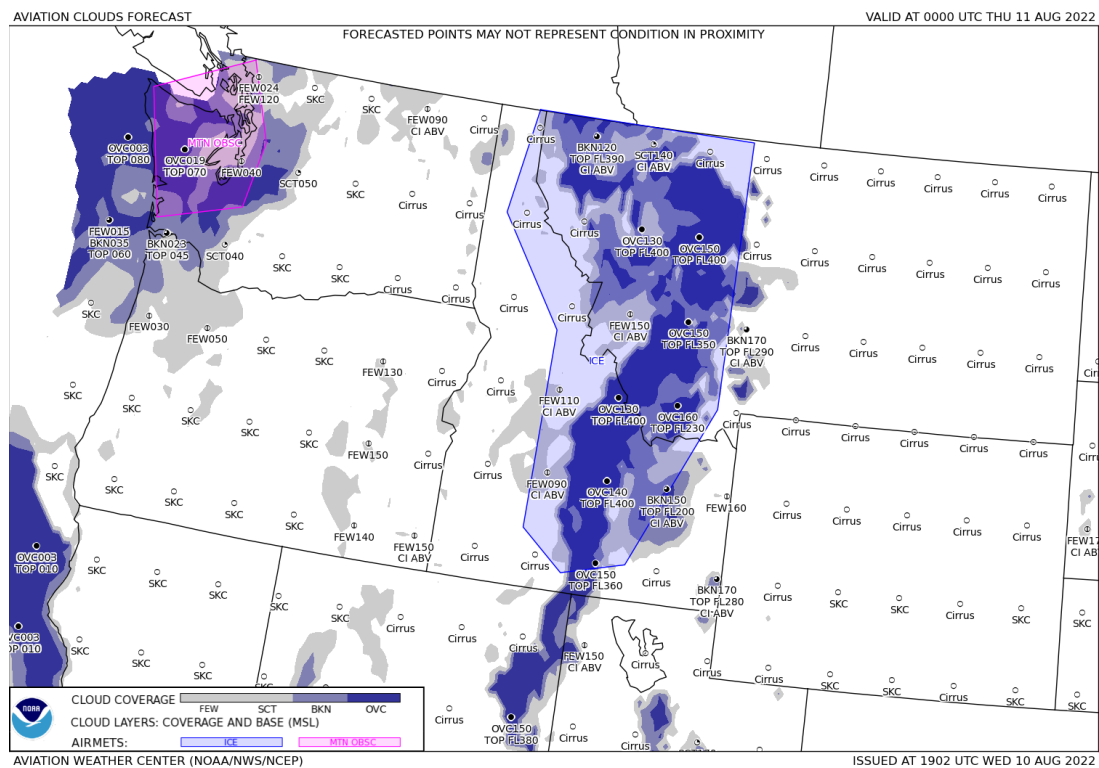


Figure 10 - NWS 6-hour Graphic Forecast for Aviation Cloud Forecast valid for 1700 PDT.

A review of the 3-hour GFA forecasts indicated generally light surface winds of 10 knots or less over the area with a chance of scattered thunderstorms (30% to 60% probability) and rain showers over the region. A G-AIRMET for IFR conditions was depicted over the Washington Pacific coast west of the accident site. The 3-hour GFA cloud forecast indicated a broken to overcast layer of clouds with bases near 2,000 ft msl and tops to 18,000 ft. The chart also depicted a G-AIRMET for mountain obscuration conditions over the area of the accident site.

The 6-hour GFA forecasts showed the precipitation diminishing over the area with light winds. The G-AIRMET for IFR conditions also diminished in size but remained along the Washington Pacific coast to the west of the accident site. The 6-hour GFA cloud forecast showed the area of broken to overcast clouds shrinking over the area with the G-AIRMET for mountain obscuration conditions continuing over the area.

7.0 NWS Inflight Weather Advisories

In-flight Aviation Weather Advisories are forecasts that advise en route aircraft of the development of potentially hazardous weather. Inflight aviation weather advisories in the conterminous U.S. are issued by the NWS AWC, as well as from the Center Weather Service Units (CWSU) at the various Air Route Traffic Control Centers (ARTCCs). There are four basic types of inflight aviation weather advisories: the Significant Meteorological Information (SIGMET), the Convective SIGMET, the Graphic-AIRMET, and the Center Weather Advisory (CWA). Inflight advisories serve to notify en-route pilots of the possibility of encountering hazardous flying conditions that may not have been forecast at the time of the preflight briefing. Whether or not the condition described is potentially hazardous to a particular flight is for the pilot to evaluate based on experience and the operational limits of the aircraft. Once issued they are broadcast by FAA air traffic controllers upon issuance and available on inflight weather broadcasts.

During the period surrounding the accident the NWS AWC and CWSU did not have any SIGMETs, Convective SIGMETs, or CWAs current. The NWS did have Graphic-AIRMETs current for IFR and mountain obscuration conditions, which extended over or bordered the accident site and are included in Figure 11.

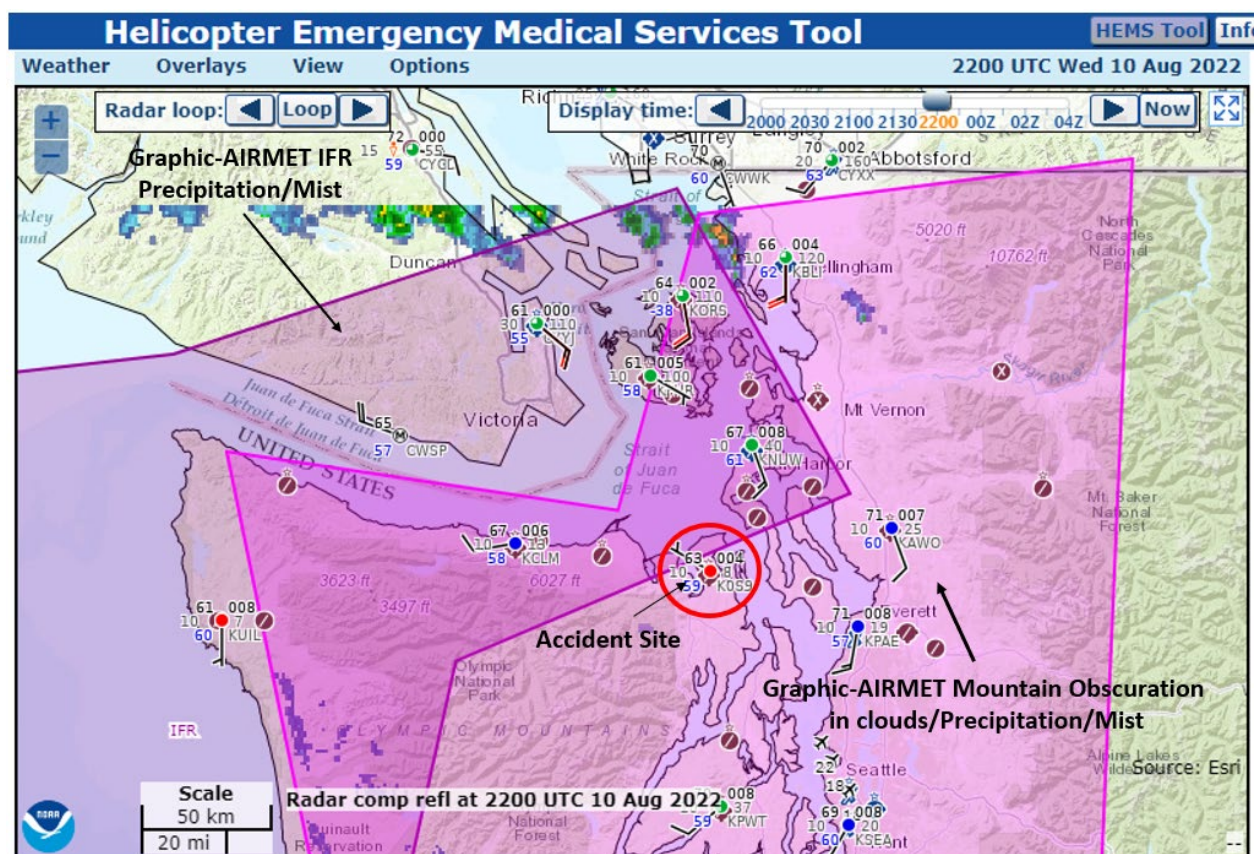


Figure 11 - NWS AWC METAR display with Graphic-AIRMETs current at 1500 PDT.

8.0 Witness Statements

A witness in the vicinity of the accident site indicated that they heard the accident airplane overfly their house, and shortly thereafter, the sound of it impacting terrain. Upon arriving at the accident site, they observed a fog bank that was about 700 ft above the ground, and about ¼ mile north of the accident site.

Submitted by:

Donald Eick
NTSB Senior Meteorologist