



Bulletin No. 13

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Aviation Injuries and Aircraft Damage in Alaska -- 1992

Spring has come to Alaska. Alaska's peak flying season is rapidly approaching. As more Alaskans take to the sky, the number of injuries involving aircraft also increases. Many of these injuries are avoidable.

With the cooperation and assistance of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), the Section of Epidemiology maintains a surveillance system in Alaska for aviation-related injuries and for incidents in which an aircraft receives substantial damage. The system uses preliminary information collected by NTSB air safety investigators during crash investigations. Because events can be reclassified as investigations proceed, final data may be slightly different than presented.

During 1992, 193 aircraft (181 airplanes, 10 helicopters, and 2 gliders) were investigated by the NTSB. A total of 422 pilots and passengers were aboard these aircraft at the time the problems occurred: 297 (70%) suffered no injury; 50 (12%) were mildly injured; 29 (7%) were seriously injured; and 46 (11%) died.

Fatal injuries occurred to 17 pilots and 29 passengers aboard 16 airplanes and 2 helicopters. Seven persons aboard these aircraft survived, all with serious injuries. Four airplanes have not been located. The 12 persons aboard these aircraft are presumed dead and are included among the fatalities.

During 1992, most injuries and aircraft damage occurred during takeoff (23%) and landing (42%). However, only 22% of fatal crashes occurred in the take-off and landing phases of flight; 44% of the fatalities were associated with the "cruise" or "maneuvering" phases of flight.

Of the 193 episodes, 50% of fatal episodes and 54% of total episodes involving an injury or aircraft damage occurred during the months of June through September. During the time period from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., 88% of all episodes and 72% of fatal episodes occurred.

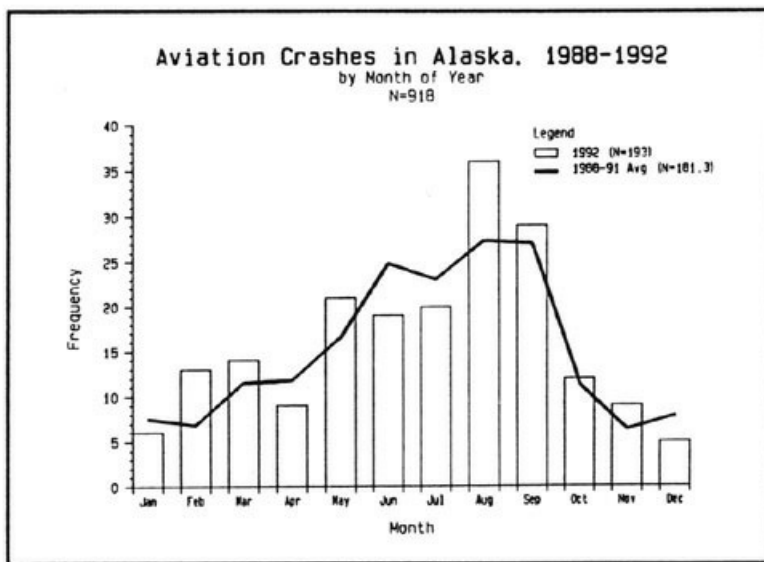
The Alaska Aviation Community is committed to safety. As part of this commitment, a Flier's Rights Safety Card and Campaign was launched last year and is being continued.

Pilot factors that contributed to aviation fatalities in 1992 included:

- Flying under the influence of alcohol - 2 cases
- Attempting to takeoff or land with strong tailwinds - 2 cases
- Attempting to land on an unlighted, frozen lake in darkness - 1 case
- VFR flight in conditions of poor visibility due to clouds, fog, snow - 5 cases
- Distraction: collisions with terrain while searching for people or wildlife on the ground - 3 cases
- Improper loading of aircraft - 2 cases
- Flight without proper training and certification - 1 case

Lessons for pilots from 1992

- Don't drink and fly.
- Recognize your limitations as well as your abilities as a pilot.
- Respect nature. Mountains are immovable objects.
- Don't press the weather. There is always another day.
- Pay attention, both in flight and while preparing for flight.
- Plan and train for emergencies.
- Don't take chances.
- Before starting the engine, verify that both you and your aircraft are fit for flight.



FLYER'S RIGHTS	FLYER'S RIGHTS
PILOTS are entitled to expect passengers to:	PASSENGERS are entitled to ask pilots about:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comply with their directions as to loading of the aircraft. • Accept the nature of the VFR flight and the possibility of delays or cancellation of the trip. • Follow their instructions in the event of an emergency. <p><i>Other important information</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Am I suitably dressed in case of an enroute crash?</i> • <i>Are ear plugs available?</i> • <i>Did I give my flight route, destination, and timeline to a reliable friend or family member?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location of the Emergency Locator Transmitter and survival equipment • How to exit the airplane during an emergency? • Tying down all cargo. • A seat and seatbelt for every passenger. • A preflight safety briefing. • the weight and balance of the aircraft. • The takeoff and landing performance for the aircraft at this weight. • The weather conditions and filing a flight plan.