



Aviation Investigation Preliminary Report

Location:	Cape Newenham, AK	Accident Number:	WPR26FA309
Date & Time:	August 20, 2026, 11:45 Local	Registration:	N128EZ
Aircraft:	Cessna 441	Injuries:	8 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 135: Air taxi & commuter - Non-scheduled		

On August 20, 2026, at about 1145 Alaska daylight time, a Cessna 441, N128EZ, was destroyed when it was involved in an accident near Cape Newenham, Alaska. The two pilots and six passengers were fatally injured. The airplane was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 135 on-demand air taxi flight.

Radio communications between Anchorage Air Route Traffic Control Center (ARTCC) and the flight crew indicated that, following departure from Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport (ANC), Anchorage, Alaska, the flight crew established communications with the ARTCC while enroute to Cape Newenham LRRS Airport (PAEH), Cape Newenham, Alaska. At the time of departure, the most recent METAR from PAEH reported 10 statute miles (SM) visibility and cloud ceilings at 800 ft above ground level (agl). At about 1016, the flight crew received weather information for PAEH and requested the RNAV Runway 15 approach. The ARTCC subsequently cleared the flight crew to descend at their discretion to 6,000 ft mean sea level (msl).

At 1027, the controller cleared the flight crew to cross the RNAV (GPS) Runway 15 Initial Approach Fix (IAF), RRLND, at or above 5,000 ft msl and cleared the flight for the RNAV Runway 15 approach. The flight crew responded that they did not want to begin the approach at that time and requested holding instructions. The controller subsequently cleared the flight crew to hold at RRLND with an expected further clearance (EFC) time of 1100. At 1043, the flight crew reported entering the hold at RRLND. The controller acknowledged the report and revised the EFC time to 1130, or earlier upon pilot request. At that time, the Automated Weather Observing System (AWOS) at PAEH reported the wind from 280° at 7 knots 1/4-mile visibility, patches of fog, and overcast 300 ft agl.

At 1102, the flight crew requested and was subsequently cleared by the controller for the RNAV Runway 15 approach. At that time the PAEH AWOS reported 3 miles visibility, mist, and a broken ceiling at 300 ft agl. At 1114, the crew reported they were executing a missed approach, advised the controller that they were operating in visual meteorological conditions, and canceled their IFR clearance. At 1124, the flight crew again contacted ARTCC, reported that the weather conditions at PAEH had improved, and requested an IFR clearance for a second RNAV Runway 15 approach. After confirming the crew could maintain terrain and obstruction clearance to 4,500 ft msl, the controller assigned a transponder code, established radar identification, and cleared the flight for the RNAV Runway 15 approach via IVUXE upon reaching 4,500 ft msl.

Between 1127 and 1135, the flight crew coordinated with the controller regarding routing for a second RNAV Runway 15 approach. After initially requesting direct routing to IVUXE, the flight crew later requested routing via WAGEN. The controller subsequently cleared the flight crew, upon reaching 4,500 ft msl, to proceed direct to WAGEN, then IVUXE, and direct to PAEH. After reporting level at 4,500 ft msl and later established on the WAGEN-to-IVUXE transition, the flight crew was cleared for the RNAV Runway 15 approach and approved to change frequencies. At that time the PAEH AWOS reported 1/4 mile visibility, fog, and an overcast ceiling at 300 ft agl. No further radio communications were received from the flight crew.

According to preliminary ADS-B data, the airplane departed from runway 7L at ANC at 0911:54. After departure the airplane climbed to an altitude of about 625 ft msl and initiated a climbing right turn to a southwest heading.

At 0924:29, the airplane climbed through an altitude of about 16,175 ft msl and entered a right turn to a westerly heading. The data showed the airplane continued climbing to flight level 280 while proceeding west toward PAEH. When the airplane was about 123 miles northeast of the Initial Approach Fix (IAF) RRLND, it began a descent. The airplane crossed RRLND at about 10,375 ft msl and subsequently performed a series of descending turns in the vicinity of the GPS fix, consistent with holding.

At 1104:31, while at an altitude of about 4,400 ft msl, the airplane turned westbound toward the Intermediate Fix (IF) IVUXE. At 1107:31, the airplane approached IVUXE at about 2,100 ft msl and initiated a left turn toward the Final Approach Fix (FAF) KRSSS. The last recorded altitude north of KRSSS was about 1,025 ft msl prior to ADS-B contact being lost at 1110:13. When ADS-B resumed at 1111:16, the airplane continued on the final approach, until contact was lost at 1111:40, the airplane was about 2.3 miles north of the Missed Approach Point (MAP) CFKMW at an altitude of about 425 ft msl. (See figure 1.)

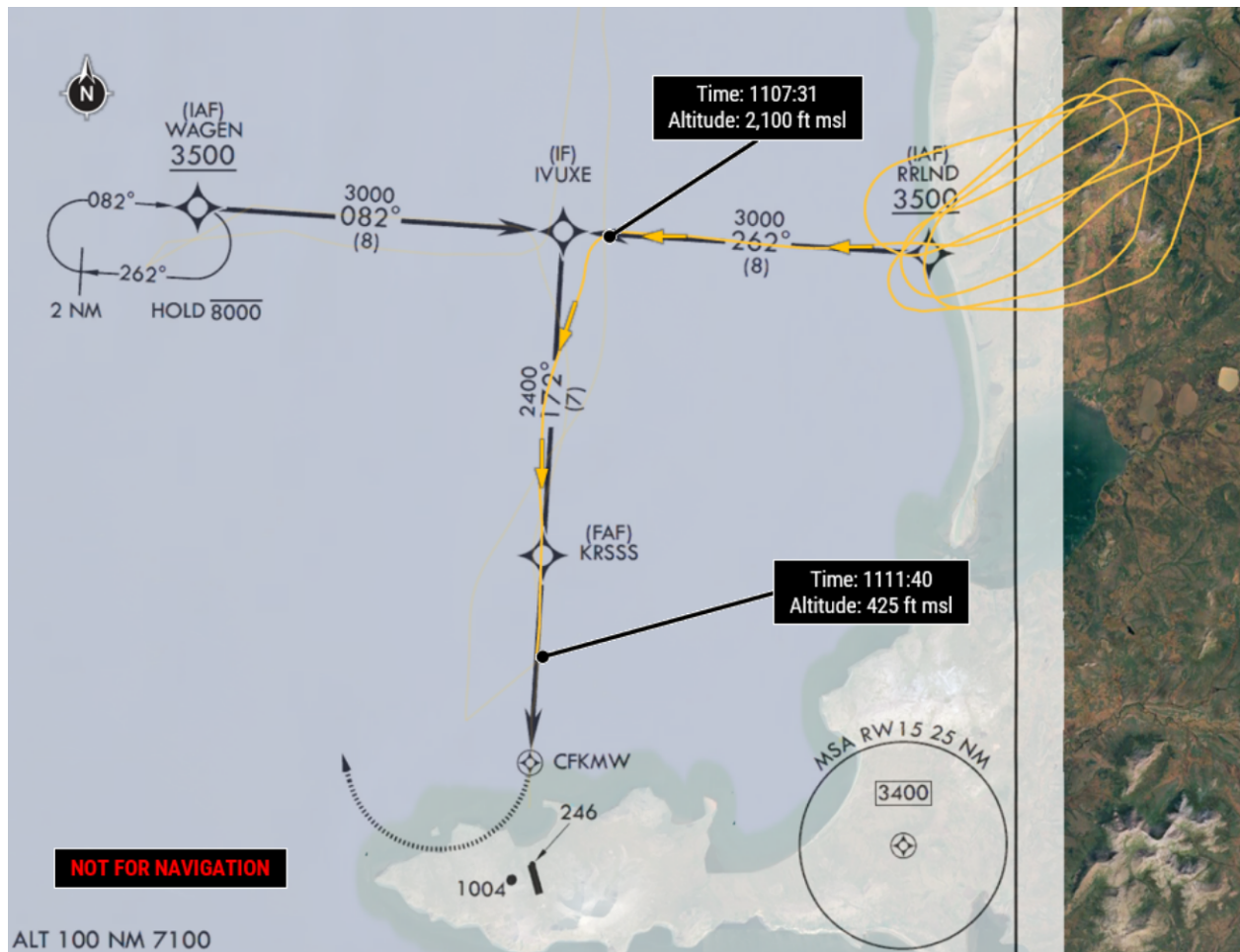


Figure 1: Preliminary ADS-B flight track between 1040:28 and 1111:40, depicting the airplane's hold near RRLND, its turn to the south near IVUXE, and the last data point between KRSSS and CFKMW.

ADS-B contact was reestablished at 1114:21 while the airplane was on a northerly heading at about 1,300 ft msl. It continued northbound past IVUXE and approached FELTI (located about 21 miles north of IVUXE) at about 2,100 ft msl. The airplane then completed a 180° left turn to a southerly heading toward IVUXE. At 1130:04, the airplane had climbed to an altitude of 3,925 ft msl and had initiated a right turn to the west, as it approached the WAGEN IAF. Between 1132:40 and 1135:56, there were several periods where ADS-B contact was lost. When ADS-B contact resumed at 1135:56, the airplane was at 4,425 ft msl on an easterly heading toward IVUXE.

At 1138:15, the airplane was at an altitude of about 2,850 ft msl when it initiated a right turn near IVUXE. At 1141:14, the airplane crossed KRSSS at about 2,400 ft msl and continued southbound along the approach course. At 1143:18, the airplane crossed the MAP CFKMW at about 1,000 ft msl. The airplane continued beyond CFKMW, while it descended to about 600 ft msl, until ADS-B contact was lost at 1143:51. At that time, the airplane was about 1.3 miles north of the runway 15 threshold at PAEH. (See figure 2.)

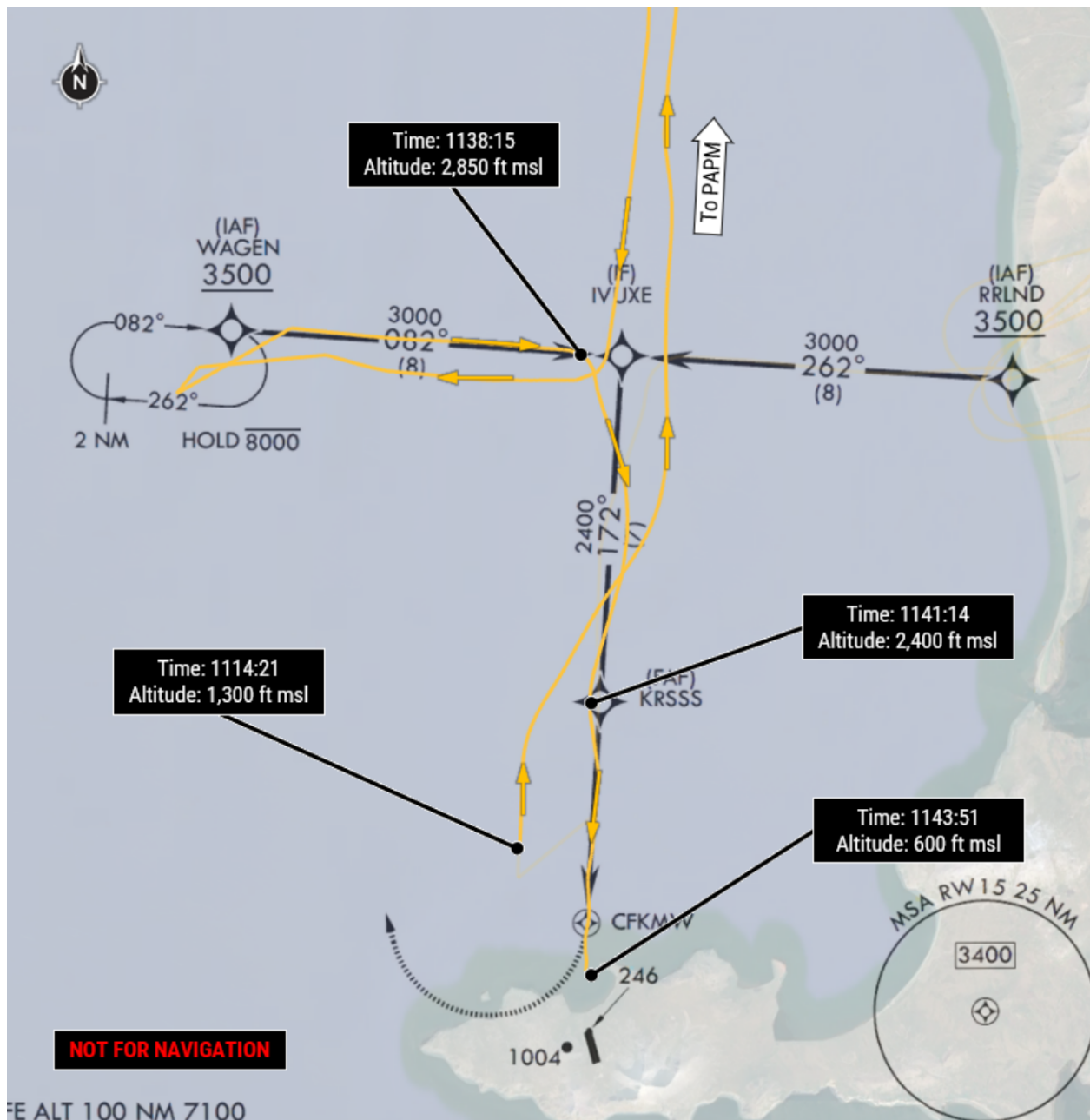


Figure 2: Preliminary ADS-B flight track between 1144:21 and 1143:51, depicting the airplane flying northbound after executing a missed approach. The airplane subsequently initiated a second approach.

A review of the RNAV (GPS) RWY 15 instrument approach plate, PAEH, dated 09 July 2026, showed Lateral Navigation (LNAV) Minimum Descent Altitude (MDA) as 1320 ft and 3 miles visibility. The MAP was located 2.2 miles north of the runway 15 threshold. Two cautions were noted: "1) Rwy located on slope of 2306' mountain. High terrain both sides and S end of rwy." and "2) Successful go-around improbable if initiated past the MAP."

Technicians who were stationed at the facility near PAEH provided statements to investigators. One technician stated that he performed a routine inspection of the runway at about 0900 on the morning of the accident. As part of this inspection, he drove the length of the runway to check the condition of the runway surface and to ensure there was no wildlife within 100 yards of the runway. At that time, he did not observe any anomalies or foreign objects on the runway and did not see any wildlife. The technician noted that he typically performs another runway inspection to ensure the runway is clear before an airplane is expected to land; however, he was unable to complete a runway inspection for the accident airplane's arrival because of thick fog that blanketed the runway.

According to the second technician, the facility featured a dedicated weather building located about 0.3 miles west of the approach end of runway 15. The building housed an aviation radio and terminal that displayed weather information from the AWOS equipment, which was located near the runway. In addition, charts and photographs in the weather building provided the distances and elevations of nearby landmarks.

At about 0800 or 0830 on the morning of the accident, the technician placed a phone call to the operator to provide the weather conditions at PAEH. In the hours following this call, the technician observed that the cloud ceilings and visibility had decreased.

Before the airplane began its first approach to PAEH, the technician went to the weather building. The technician used the radio to relay the conditions indicated by the AWOS, augmented by his observation of the visibility reference points listed on the weather building charts. He noted that when the airplane performed its first approach, a reference point that was 1 7/8 miles away from the weather building was obscured by fog. After the airplane performed the missed approach, the flight crew told the technician that they were going to attempt to land at Platinum Airport (PAPM), Platinum, Alaska, about 23 miles north of PAEH. The technician stated that, after the airplane's first approach, he initially could see small areas of blue sky to the north, but the visibility at PAEH had diminished further.

Several minutes later, the flight crew reestablished radio contact with the technician, stating that they had been unable to contact PAPM on the radio and wanted to perform a second approach to PAEH. The technician stated that, by the time the airplane had begun its second approach, none of visibility reference points were visible, and he could no longer see the runway. When the flight crew reported they were two minutes out, the technician relayed the AWOS weather reading and noted to himself that he did not have any visual references from the weather building.

Shortly thereafter, the technician heard "normal motor sounds" as the airplane approached the runway. He then heard the engines "throttle up," followed by a "backfire," after which the sounds ceased. After unsuccessful attempts to locate the airplane on ground or to contact the

flight crew by radio, the technician and other personnel from the facility began to search for the airplane. The wreckage was located in an area of rising terrain about 0.5 miles west of the approach end of runway 15.

Examination of the accident site revealed the first identifiable point of contact (FIPC) was an area of disturbed rocks measuring about 6 ft by 6 ft, which exhibited evidence of fire, at an elevation of about 610 ft mean sea level (msl). The debris path extended approximately 160 ft on a true heading of about 250° and continued upslope onto a small, relatively level rocky area. The main wreckage came to rest on its left side on a true heading of approximately 120°, about 160 ft from the FIPC. Wreckage distributed along the debris path included fragments of the wings, fuselage, propeller blades, flaps, and ailerons. All major structural components of the airplane were identified at the accident site.

The wreckage is pending recovery to a secure location for further examination.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Cessna	Registration:	N128EZ
Model/Series:	441	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Amateur Built:			
Operator:	N128EZ LLC	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	On-demand air taxi (135)
Operator Designator Code:	3SVA		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	IMC	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	PAEH, 541 ft msl	Observation Time:	11:49 Local
Distance from Accident Site:	1 Nautical Miles	Temperature/Dew Point:	10°C / 10°C
Lowest Cloud Condition:		Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	7 knots / None, 320°
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 300 ft AGL	Visibility:	0.25 miles
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	IFR
Departure Point:	Anchorage, AK (PANC)	Destination:	Cape Newenham, AK

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	2 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	6 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	On-ground
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	Unknown
Total Injuries:	8 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	58.639575,-162.05796 (est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Gutierrez, Eric

Additional Participating Persons: James Howery; FAA; Anchorage, AK
Jacob Crewlow; Security Aviation
Peter Basile; Textron Aviation Inc.; Wichita, KS
Dana Metz; Honeywell Aerospace; Phoenix, AZ
Randolph W. Rushworth; US Airforce; Kirtland Air Force Base, NM
Laura Porro; FAA; Los Angeles, CA
Christopher Rosati; NATCA; Oakland, CA
Karena Marinas; NATCA Party Coordinator; Palmdale, CA
Margaret Backcock; FAA Party Coordinator for ATC; Washington, DC

Investigation Class: [Class 3](#)

Note: