



# Department of the Interior

## Lessons Learned

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**Subject:** Flight Preparations

**Area of Focus:** Enhancing Flight Safety

**Distribution:** All Aviation Operations

**Discussion:** One of the SAFECOM system purposes is to provide the ability to share lessons learned and offer recommendations for enhancing flight safety. Sharing lessons learned fits within one of the SMS Components - Safety Promotion. More information on SMS can be found in [DOI APB 23-01](#),

A recent example includes an incident reported by a bureau pilot operating in Alaska. Here's the story:

When departing a floating dock in a narrow side channel of a large lake, the left wing struck branches of a tree on the shore adjacent the dock. Immediately after the wing contacted the branches, the pilot shut down the engine and repositioned the aircraft back to the dock by hand to conduct an inspection of the wing. The damage consisted of a small dent in the leading edge of the wing and scraping beneath the wing and aileron. The Office of Aviation Services and the bureau Regional Aviation Manager were contacted for further guidance.



To reduce the risk of future incidents, the pilot identified several key strategies:

- Employ a crew member to maintain the aircraft's position until engine start and consider departing from a less confined area if necessary.
- Conduct a thorough assessment of wind and water conditions prior to departure to minimize risk.
- Consider removing trees and shrubs adjacent to the dock and the surrounding area to enhance safety during entry and exit.

We all greatly appreciate the pilot's willingness to share this experience and the lessons learned.

*/s/ Keith C. Raley*

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