

Pilot Safety

"The failure of an Anchorage pilot to stay with his plane after he crashed recently is an example of how a simple operation can possibly result in disaster," Public Safety Commissioner Pat Wellington recently said.

He went on to advise pilots of downed planes, and people lost in the wilderness to stay in one place until they are found.

The commissioner pointed out that the pilot's plane was found within 48 hours of crashing on Mt. Spurr about 60 miles north of Anchorage.

"If he had stayed with the plane he would have been picked up with a minimum of harm to himself," said Wellington. "In electing to 'walk out' at such times, a pilot not only lessens the chance of being found, but exposes himself to considerable danger in descending through areas where precipices and cliffs could give him considerable trouble."

Commissioner Wellington said whenever a person in distress decides to leave an area he should blaze a trail no matter how far he intends to go from his original camp.

"If you leave a note that you are going somewhere, make sure you indicate the direction by blazing trees, piling rocks, or, if on snow, placing some kind of cloth or sticks in the direction which you are going.

"Rescue personnel are not dumb. Most of them have been on enough missions to know how people think when lost and are pretty good at tracking them.

"However, anything an individual can do to help rescuers serves to increase his chances of survival," the commissioner noted.