

From: [Keliher Zoe](#)
To: [Struhsaker Jim](#);
Subject: FW: Helicopter Accident
Date: Thursday, May 20, 2010 2:17:13 AM

[below](#)

From: Keliher Zoe
Sent: Thursday, May 21, 2009 9:05 AM
To: Eick Donald; Struhsaker Jim
Subject: FW: Helicopter Accident

[From the person giving the weather to the pilots \(as heard on CVR\)](#)

From: Matthew Lingenfelter [mailto:mlingenfelter@fs.fed.us]
Sent: Wednesday, May 20, 2009 8:45 PM
To: Keliher Zoe
Subject: Re: Helicopter Accident

Zoe,

I hope this information assists in the accident investigation.

I established positive communication with 766 on the designated air to ground forest service frequency shortly after myself, and the rest of the incoming fly crew retrieved our gear and exited the aircraft. I had positive feedback from the pilot. From that point forward I maintained radio communication with the aircraft on the second and third approach and departers giving accurate wind speed and direction buy orientating myself with my compass, identifying and observing the wind indicators that were already in place on the helispot. There were two wind indicators at H-44 that consisted of bright high visible pink flagging tied on small trees approximately 5' to 6' in height directly at the pilots 12:00, (distance away from 766 unknown), and the other could be seen as the ship was approaching H-44. My experience with recognizing and reporting atmospheric characteristics that could influence helicopter performance are as follows. I've been a firefighter for eight years, five of those years have been in

aviation management working directly with rotor-winged aircraft. I'm confidently able to identify and relay to pilots winds associated with fire control problems on the ground, thunder storm cells, wind speed changes and direction shifts associated with cold front passages and general winds at helibases and helispots. That evening on H-44 the winds were light approximately 1-4 mph always at the nose or departure into the wind for 766 off H-44. There currently doesn't exist specific red card positions in the fire and aviation management qualifications handbook FSH 5109.17, specifically related to giving wind speed and direction. No one on the ground gave any temperature readings to the pilots from what I recall. I do know that in the mission planning that took part at Trinity helibase prior to the troop shuttle on H-44, it was discussed that there was going to be a series of power checks(for check ride purposes), before landing at H-44 and the pilots would monitor the OAT during power checks for the mission.

This is what I recall Zoe, if there's anything else, or any other questions! please feel free to call my cell phone or the helibase anytime.

Matt Lingenfelter
Squad Leader
Chester Fly Crew

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

WITH

Matt Leigenfelter, US Forest Service

April 14, 2010

Weaverville, LAX08PA259

Sikorsky, S-61N, N612AZ, Tanker 766

Interviewer: Jim Struhsaker, SASI, NTSB

Matt arrived at H-44 on N612AZ at 1804. He was a Helicopter Manager for the US Forest Service. His task was to brief passengers, and prepare them for boarding the helicopter and buckling themselves into their seats. He handled the radio and informed the pilot of manifested weights and HAZMAT material. When the helicopter departed with the second load, the pilot told Matt that after he dropped his passengers, he was going to refuel. He would return to H-44 in about ½ hour.

When N612AZ returned for the third load, Matt was located on the South-West side of H-44 (40:54:51 N, 123:15:09 W). He had been busy loading cargo nets with personal gear and making sure the passengers were properly briefed for their flight. He said that he could hear N612AZ approaching from the east and he observed the helicopter crossing the ridge North-East of him [the ridge extended 055 degrees from his location]. The helicopter was on a north-westerly track, approximately ½ to ¾ of a mile away (estimated 40:55:13 N, 123:14:33 W, elevation 6,040 feet). He remembers that the helicopter appeared high above the ridge; he estimated 800 to 1,000 feet above the terrain. Sometime later, he saw N612AZ approaching the LZ over the meadow on a South-Easterly track.

Matt Leigenfelter

From: [Matthew Lingenfelter](#)
To: [Struhsaker Jim;](#)
Subject: Re:
Date: Friday, July 16, 2010 11:23:26 AM

Jim,

The last statement was more realistic to the events of 8/5/2008. Thanks for keeping me in the loop.

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Matthew Lingenfelter
Captain 506 A
Shasta-Trinity National Forest

Weaverville, CA 96093
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