

On December 26, 2011, at 0554 eastern daylight time, a Bell 206B, N5016M, operated by SK Logistics, d.b.a. SK Jets, was substantially damaged during collision with terrain while maneuvering near Green Cove Springs, Florida. The certificated airline transport pilot and 2 passengers (a doctor and a medical technician) were fatally injured. The on-demand air taxi flight was conducted under the provisions of 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 135. Night instrument meteorological conditions prevailed and no flight plan was filed for the planned flight to Shands Cair Heliport (63FL), Gainesville, Florida. The flight originated from Mayo Clinic Heliport (6FL1), Jacksonville, Florida, about 0537.

According to representatives of the Mayo Clinic Hospital, Jacksonville, Florida, the flight was contracted by the hospital to carry a doctor and a medical technician to Shands Hospital, Gainesville, Florida, for the purpose of procuring an organ for transplantation. The flight was then to return to the Mayo Clinic Hospital with the procured organ. The flight did not arrive at Shands Hospital and was reported overdue by a Mayo Clinic Hospital representative, which activated local search and rescue operations. The wreckage was located about 1000 in a remote wooded area by the Jacksonville Sheriff's Department Aviation Unit.

According to preliminary radar and communication data from the Federal Aviation Administration, the helicopter departed 6FL1 to the southwest, flying a track slightly south and east of a direct course to 63FL. The pilot contacted Jacksonville Approach at 0549 to inquire about the status of restricted airspace. At 0550, the controller replied the restricted areas were inactive, and the pilot acknowledged the transmission. No further communications were received from the helicopter. During the enroute portion of the flight, the helicopter's altitude varied between 200 and 700 feet mean sea level (msl). The last radar target was recorded at 0553:23, about 1 mile north of the accident site, indicating an altitude of 300 feet msl.

A debris field was observed which originated with several trees that were severed by breaks at descending altitudes. The debris field was approximately 320 feet long, 70 feet wide, extending on a magnetic course of 172 degrees. The initial tree strike was at an estimated height of 30 feet above the ground, which severed an approximately 50-foot tall tree, at a ground elevation of 118 feet msl. The main wreckage was located about 175 feet along the debris path and approximately 80 percent of the wreckage was consumed during a postcrash fire. Sections of the skids, tailboom, main rotor blades, and engine were identified. The airframe and engine were retained for further examination.

The accident site was located about 12 miles northeast of Palatka Municipal Airport (28J), Palatka, Florida. The recorded weather at 28J, at 0554, was: wind 070 degrees at 5 knots; visibility 5 miles in mist; overcast ceiling at 400 feet; temperature 17 degrees C; dew point 15 degrees C; altimeter 30.21 inches Hg.