

**INSPECTORS FACTUAL STATEMENT FOR  
ACCIDENT LAX02FA281**

On September 12, 2002 Inspector Frank J. Vavra inspected an Aerospatiale AS-350B helicopter, N357NT operated by Heli-USA, S9HA, that was involved in a accident at Grand Canyon West Airport (1G4) on September 11, 2002. Frank J. Vavra is an Aviation Safety Inspector (ASI) assigned to the Federal Aviation Administration Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) at Las Vegas, NV, WP19.

On 9-11-02 this aircraft experienced a complete hydraulic failure. The pilot stated he attempted to perform a landing with the airspeed at approximately 30 knots. Upon final approach to the airport the aircraft started to rotate and after 2 revolutions the pilot reduced the throttle in an attempt to stop the spin. From an altitude of approximately 15 to 25 feet the pilot attempted to autorotate. The aircraft landed hard, the right rear skid tube dug into the ground approximately 10 inches resulting in the crosstubes rotating rearward in the saddles and breaking. The forward half of the skid tubes rotated upward stopping adjacent to the doors. The aircraft then bounced back into the air and rotated 180 degrees with the tailboom separating and the main rotor contacting the ground destroying the main rotor blades and star flex. During the crash sequence the right rear passenger access door opened allowing the passengers foot to become trapped under the fuselage. All passenger belts were inspected for function and damage with no deficiencies noted. Due to the skid tubes position after breakage, the passengers and pilot had to exit the aircraft through the door windows. During the crash sequence the fuel cell drain valve was damaged causing a fuel leak.

On 9-19-02 an inspection was conducted on the hydraulic pump and S-40 splined coupler. The aluminum coupler showed evidence of spline smearing in the contact area with the hydraulic pump. The NTSB will conduct further examination of the hydraulic pump and splined coupler.

The foregoing statement, consisting of 1 typewritten page, is complete and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Frank J. Vavra  
Aviation Safety Inspector  
Las Vegas Flight Standards District Office