National Transportation Safety Board

Office of Aviation Safety

Washington, D.C. 20594-2000

May 24, 2010

ERRATA #1 – METEOROLOGICAL ADDENDUM REPORT

LAX08PA259

A. ACCIDENT

Location: Weaverville, California
Date: August 5, 2008
Time: 1941 Pacific daylight time (0241 UTC August 6, 2008)
Aircraft: Sikorsky S-61N helicopter, registration: N612AZ

B. METEOROLOGICAL SPECIALIST

Donald E. Eick
Senior Meteorologist
National Transportation Safety Board
Operational Factors Division, AS-30
Washington, D.C. 20594-2000

C. SUMMARY

On August 5, 2008, about 1941 Pacific daylight time (PDT), a Sikorsky S-61N helicopter, N612AZ, registered to Carson Helicopters Incorporated and under contract to the United States Forest Service, impacted trees and terrain during initial climb after takeoff in the Shasta-Trinity Forest near Weaverville, California, while performing a forest fire support mission. The airline transport pilot, the safety crewmember and seven firefighters were killed; the commercial copilot and three firefighters were seriously injured. The helicopter was consumed by post impact fire, which burned for two days. The U.S. Forest Service firefighting support mission was being conducted as a Public Use operation.

D. CORRECTIONS

Page 16 of the Meteorological Addendum Report, dated November 25, 2009, please note the following additional and/or corrected information:

Mattew Lingenfelter – reported light wind at less than 3 knots with a direction at the nose of the helicopter for departure from H-44.

Bill Coultas – copilot indicated winds from the *south-southwest* at 3 to 5 knots, at the time of lift off from H-44 with a temperature of 22° C.

The cockpit voice recorder (CVR) transcript indicated at 1930 PDT the flight crew contacted the H-44 helipad *when they were about 8 miles out* and were provided a report of wind from the south at 3 to 5 knots. As the S-61 was approaching the H-44 landing zone at 1935 PDT the copilot stated the OAT was 20° C[3].

Donald E. Eick
NTSB Senior Meteorologist

[3] *To determine the surface temperature at H-44 from this reading, the helicopter's height above the landing zone and the temperature lapse rate are required. The helicopter's precise position and the actual temperature lapse rate at the time of this reading are unknown. Using an estimated height of 300 to 700 feet above the landing zone and the dry adiabatic lapse rate of 3° C per 1,000 feet, the surface temperature at H-44 would be 21° to 22° C. Instrument error and any temperature lag would also have an impact on the final reading at the surface.*