



National Transportation Safety Board

Memorandum

From: Michael Huhn
Subject: Interview Summaries Regarding Incident Involving Aerospatiale AS355F1, N406LH, March 22, 2008

The following paragraphs contain information obtained from interviews regarding the subject incident.

Information obtained from Mr. Jason Costello (N406LH pilot) March 24, 2008

- He has been a pilot at the operator for approximately 2 1/2 years
- The accident heliport was the only heliport where the operator boards or deboards passengers
- The operator did not base its helicopters at JRA, and rarely shut down the helicopters' engines when the helicopters were at JRA
- The pilot conducts 40 to 50 takeoffs and landings per day
- The operator did not have any written procedures for the pilots to depart from the landing spots
- The general departure procedure was to bring the helicopter to a hover about 10 feet above the ground, back out over the river, and then accomplish a pedal turn into the wind
- He described the landing site layout and the operator's facilities there
 - Multiple circles-spot [helipad] designators
 - Spot 7 was the northernmost
 - Two trailers bounding the NE corner of the site were the operator's passenger facilities
 - A building at the SE corner of the site was the operator's operations facility
- The Aerospatiale was departing from spot 7 when the collision occurred

Information obtained from Mr. Kevin Pearson (Eurocopter holding pilot) March 26, 2008

- The pilot was a new-hire at the operator
- The pilot was qualified to fly the Eurocopter under FAR Part 91
- He was not qualified to fly the Eurocopter on revenue flights for the operator (Part 135)
- He was seated in and holding the controls on the Eurocopter to assist another operating pilot when the collision occurred
- That operating pilot had just flown the Eurocopter in, deboarded his passengers, and then requested a pilot [Mr. Pearson] to do a "control hold" (temporarily relieve him by holding the helicopter's controls while the engine was still operating) in order to attend to business in the operator's facility

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Michael Huhn
Air Safety Investigator



National Transportation Safety Board

Memorandum

From: Michael Huhn
Subject: Summary of Follow-up Interview Regarding Incident Involving Aerospatiale AS355FI, N406LH, March 22, 2008

Information obtained from Mr. Jason Costello (Pilot, N406LH) April 30, 2009

- His previous total helicopter time of about 5,000 hours was comprised of the following approximate experience:
 - ~2,000 hours in Bell 206 (single engine)
 - ~800-1,000 hours in Bell 430 (twin engine)
 - Balance of hours in a variety of single engine helicopters, including Robinson, Schweizer, and Enstrom
- The operator (Liberty Helicopters) provided his training in the AS355 multi-engine helicopter
- This training consisted of approximately 3-5 hours in the AS355
- His AS355 "check ride" (qualification flight) was accomplished a few weeks prior to the incident
- After the AS355 qualification flight, he continued to also fly the AS350 for the operator
- The flight and engine instrumentation in the two helicopter models was not significantly different (conventional instrumentation vs. 'glass cockpit'), but the layouts did differ between the two models
- He last flew the AS355 a few days prior to the incident flight
- During the incident takeoff, there were no problems or indications of problems with the helicopter; he focused on the engine instruments ("hover torque limits") due to his relative unfamiliarity with the helicopter
- Neither the operator nor the heliport provided aircraft marshallers to assist the pilots during arrival or departure

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Michael Huhn
Air Safety Investigator