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Air Safety Investigator
Western Pacific Region

Date: February 8, 2011
Person Contacted: Border Patrol Agent Waite (first on scene)
NTSB Accident Number: WPR11GA115

Interviewer: Deputy Gardner

Narrative:

The following is a synopsis of the information provided by Agent Waite in an interview on this date:

Witness did not see helicopter flying

Witness stayed at Waterman/Avra Valley road intersection per deputy instructions to act as guide for other responders

A man in a white pickup truck (Pioneer Landscape & gravel pit) stopped and told witness his employee had witnessed helicopter accident.

Witness followed truck, stopped where indicated, looked w binoculars, saw strobe (red) on bottom of helicopter- witness then notified his dispatch

From time of positive ID to when he began to head up hill was approximately 5 minutes (getting 1st aid gear)- gravel guy told witness to follow in car into gravel pit for easier access to top of hill- then witness told gravel guy to direct others to site

Took him 20-25 minutes to hike up to helicopter

Shouted to helicopter, saw 1 guy out and communicated w him

Talked to other guy in helicopter who was conscious (it was the other back seat guy; witness helped him out of helicopter & sat him down in safe spot (pax had wrist injury))

At accident site 20-25 minutes b4 anyone else showed

Victim #3 (front seat pax) was initially unconscious starting to regain consciousness.

Witness triaged, pilot was "black" - no immediate assistance rendered

Before event, witness was stationary in his vehicle, 4-5 miles from accident site, light rain (wipers every 30 sec in stationary car)

No rain from 5 minutes before his notification through all his onsite activities

"Gusty but not strong winds (10-15, gusting 20 mph)" "Constant wind"

He thought helicopter struck at edge of plateau ~40 yds above main wreck.

Wind on plateau? - Witness couldn't tell, but another helicopter had landed there, and a Blackhawk was hovering

The rear seat pax he extracted was talking to 911

Front seat pax said he recalled helicopter spinning several times and then "didn't remember/blacked out"

Ft seat pax didn't recall prior activity

Witness didn't ask other passenger what happened
Engine was not running when witness arrived at helicopter
Electrical system was active- red strobe on bottom was operating, some undetermined beeping
(he thought it might be ELT)
"NO fuel smell at all" also did not see any leaks or smoke or signs of fire
Witness did not shut off fuel
1st victim had fire, but did not appear to have used it
Witness didn't touch controls/switches.
PJs detached battery via quick disconnect and turned off key, plus tied helicopter to mountain to
prevent downslide (tied via rotorhead)
He helped PJs extract victims (front seat pax & pilot)
No tools used to remove/cut helicopter to extract front seat pax) or pilot
Tail boom was under helicopter

Specific topics

- A. How much familiarity with helicopters/aviation does he have? "pretty familiar" not a pilot but a trained crewman
- B. What attracted his attention to the helicopter in the first place ? in vehicle at intersection of Avra Valley rd and Pump station rd. deputy was Westbound and signaled witness to follow him. Witness called his dispatch for information, was advised of helicopter accident