



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Central Region – Arlington, Texas

Date: September 26, 2012

Who: Charles Danley, Baytown Airport Manager

RE: CEN12FA621

In a telephone conversation, Mr. Danley said fuel is purchased at the airport from a fuel pump. During the day, a lineman will assist pilots in fueling their aircraft if requested. Mr. Danley stated that the pilot and passenger of N281RG flew into Baytown airport on September 10, 2012 and landed near the fuel pump around 2:15 pm. The pilot asked the lineman for a quart of oil and to top off the fuel tank. According to airport fueling records for that day, 22.9 gallons of fuel was placed on the helicopter at "1:29 pm." I asked Mr. Danley if there was a possibility that the time stamp on the fueling records was off an hour, and he confirmed that it was an hour behind. This meant the fuel pump was activated at 2:29 pm. Mr. Danley said the pilot went into the main terminal building to pay for the fuel. He remarked that there would be a slight time difference from the time the fuel pump was activated to when the pilot's credit card was swiped for the purchase.

Mr. Danley said he saw the pilot, passenger, and the passenger's husband in the terminal eating lunch before the pilot and passenger departed at 3:00 pm. The airplane departed to the southwest. About 3:30 pm, he received a call that a helicopter had crashed near Crosby, Texas.

Leah D. Yeager
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board



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Record of Conversation

Central Region – Arlington, Texas

Date: September 18, 2012

Who: Albert Collier and Kenneth Franklin

RE: CEN12FA621, Houston, TX

In a telephone conversation, Mr. Collier and Mr. Franklin stated they were driving westbound on Highway 90 when they first observed the helicopter. On behalf of Mr. Franklin, Mr. Collier stated that when they first observed the helicopter it was spinning counter-clockwise and was approximately 75 feet above the ground. The helicopter was about 1 to 1.5 miles away from their position. Mr. Collier thought the pilot was attempting to avoid the highway and drifted over toward the steel pipe storage yard. They did not see any smoke or debris trailing the helicopter. He said the helicopter descended quickly (less than 30 seconds total) and the main rotor blades did not look like they were moving. The nose of the helicopter was pointed down toward the ground. Neither one could hear the helicopter prior to the impact.

Neither Mr. Collier nor Mr. Franklin saw the impact because they were parking their vehicle off the side of the road. Once they got out of the vehicle, they ran to the steel pipe yard's gate and watched the first responders' on-scene use fire extinguishers to contain the post-impact fire.

Leah D. Yeager
Sr. Air Safety Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board



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Record of Conversation

Central Region – Arlington, Texas

Date: September 11, 2012

Who: Mr. Jerrod Dannar

RE: CEN12FA621, Houston, TX

In a telephone conversation, Mr. Dannar stated that he was driving west on Highway 90 toward the beltway when he first observed the helicopter. He said it was about a mile away and at first he thought it was a remote controlled helicopter. Mr. Dannar said the helicopter was "way up there" and estimated that it was about 400-500 feet above the ground. The helicopter was spinning slowly (he did not recall what direction it was turning) around the main rotor shaft and was descending vertically about 70-80 miles per hour as if it had "lost power." There was no smoke or parts coming off the helicopter as it descended. The main rotor blades were turning "slower than expected" and were not deflected upward. Mr. Dannar said that the tail rotor did not appear to be turning. The helicopter then impacted the ground, which resulted in a large dust cloud. Mr. Dannar stopped his vehicle and ran toward the helicopter. After he negotiated a chain link fence, he and another witness used fire extinguishers to contain the post-impact fire, which he said was more intense on the right side of the helicopter, until the fire department arrived. Mr. Dannar said the occupants appeared to be dead or unconscious since they were not moving.

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Sr. Air Safety Investigator
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Record of Conversation

Central Region – Arlington, Texas

Date: September 14, 2012

Who: Mr. Jose Escamilla, witness

RE: CEN12FA621, Houston, TX

In a telephone conversation, Mr. Escamilla stated that he was driving east on Highway 90 toward the beltway when he first observed the helicopter about a mile away. It was 70 to 100 feet-high above the ground and was slowly spinning counter-clockwise around the main rotor shaft and was in a slow vertical descent. Mr. Escamilla said the helicopter seemed to move in “slow-motion.” When it was approximately 40 to 50 feet above the ground, the helicopter’s descent rate increased rapidly before it impacted the ground. He thought the pilot was trying to land and he did not observe any smoke coming from the helicopter prior to impact. Mr. Escamilla noted that the main rotor blades were turning “pretty slow” and it seemed “like he lost power.” The body of the helicopter was level and the main rotor blades were not deflected upward. He could not hear the helicopter prior to the impact, which occurred just as he was stepping out of his vehicle. After the impact, Mr. Escamilla observed a large dust plume as he was running to the steel yard. As he was trying to crawl under a chain link fence he saw a fireball coming from the helicopter. Mr. Escamilla said that he and another responder used fire extinguishers to contain the post-impact fire until the fire department arrived. He said the fire was more intense near the rear of the helicopter on the right side.

Leah D. Yeager

Sr. Air Safety Investigator

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Record of Conversation

Central Region – Arlington, Texas

Date: September 18, 2012

Who: Mr. Kylie Montgomery

RE: CEN12FA621, Houston, TX

In a telephone conversation, Mr. Montgomery stated that he was working on a construction site located about ¼-mile from where he first observed the helicopter. He said the helicopter was hovering over a building near the accident site “real low.” All appeared to be normal. The witness lost sight of the helicopter for about 10 minutes due to work related reasons before he saw the helicopter a second time. This time, the helicopter was hovering around 100-150 feet-above the ground over the steel pipe yard. The nose of the helicopter was pointed toward the north. He could not hear the helicopter from his location. Mr. Montgomery said that the helicopter hovered for approximately 1 to 1.5 minutes before it “leaned sideways” to the east and the “tail came around on him.” The helicopter then began to turn to the right slowly as it began a slow vertical descent in a slight nose-down and to-the- right attitude. Mr. Montgomery said the helicopter spun 4 to 4.5 times in a “wide-motion” about 10-15 mph as it descended “straight down” about 10-15 mph, as if the pilot was trying to correct for the situation. He said the main rotors were turning and deflected slightly upwards, but he could not estimate how fast. He never looked at the tail rotor.

Mr. Montgomery said from the time the helicopter entered the right turn to the time it impacted the ground it was about 10-15 seconds. Once on the ground, he could still see the main rotor blades. Approximately 30 seconds later, he saw that the helicopter had caught on fire and called 911. He did not respond to the scene.

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