

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Vehicle Recorder Division
Washington, D.C. 20594

November 23, 2020

Addendum - Personal Electronic Devices

Specialist's Factual Report By W. Deven Chen

1. EVENT SUMMARY

Location: Calabasas, California
Date: January 26, 2020
Aircraft: Sikorsky S76-B
Registration: N72EX
Operator: Island Express Holding Corp.
NTSB Number: DCA20MA059

On January 26, 2020, about 0945 Pacific standard time, a Sikorsky S76-B helicopter, N72EX, was destroyed when it was involved in an accident near Calabasas, California. The pilot and eight passengers were fatally injured. The helicopter was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 135 charter flight.

2. GROUP

A group was not convened.

3. DETAILS OF INVESTIGATION

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) Vehicle Recorder Division received the following personal electronic device (PED) that belonged to the pilot:

Device Manufacturer/Model:	Apple iPhone 11 Pro
IMEI Number:	353236100861429

3.1. Device Description

PEDs are a category of devices comprised primarily of portable computing devices and mobile phones. Portable computing devices are typically capable of internet access, email, messaging services, and can run user-installed applications to perform specific tasks. Depending on the model, mobile phones can perform many of the same tasks as portable computing devices, plus have voice call and text messaging capabilities. PED

user and system data is typically stored on non-volatile memory¹ (NVM) and can be accessed through manufacturer-provided interfaces.

3.2. Apple iPhone 11 Pro Data Recovery

Upon arrival at the Vehicle Recorder Division, an exterior examination revealed the device had severe impact damage, as shown in Figure 1. The device's motherboard was removed and was found to have deformed, as shown in Figure 2. The motherboard did not power up on a surrogate device. The extent of the damage precluded normal and advanced recovery procedures at the lab and additional attempts were unsuccessful in powering up the device. In a discussion with the Investigator-In-Charge, the device was sent to a commercial data recovery facility for repair. The phone powered up on a surrogate after repair and was locked with a 4-digit passcode. As of November 23, 2020, no passcodes were provided to the Vehicle Recorder Division. The phone was sent to the D.C. Department of Forensic Sciences for data extraction assistance.



Figure 1: Front and back of Apple iPhone 11 Pro as received.



Figure 2: Motherboard of Apple iPhone 11 Pro in deformed condition.

¹ Non-volatile memory is semiconductor memory that does not require external power for data retention.

3.3. Apple iPhone 11 Pro Data Description

The D.C. Department of Forensic Sciences could extract only partial unencrypted data from the device without the passcode. The extracted data included about 180 voicemails and 880 thumbnail photos. The data were reviewed and were not pertinent to the accident. Thus, no accident related data were recovered from this device.