

K & S Helicopters, Inc. d/b/a Paradise Helicopters
Kalo, HI
June 8, 2022
ANC22FA041

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

WASHINGTON, D.C.

SURVIVAL FACTORS SPECIALIST'S FACTUAL REPORT

ATTACHMENT 3

Emergency Response Interview Summary
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Interview: Kalei Gregory (Pilot for Paradise Helicopters/ Pilot for Hawaii County Fire Department)

Date: 06/16/2022

Location: Phone

Start Time: 1514

Representative: Declined

Present: Amanda Taylor (NTSB)

During the interview Fire Fighter Kalei stated the following:

He is the Paradise director of operations, as well as a pilot, additionally he is a pilot for Hawaii County Fire Department.

He was working at the fire department that day. He was "toned out" at the fire station. The call was helicopter down on the south side of the island, and commercially it is primarily Paradise that flies in that area. He then immediately called Paradise to know what aircraft were flying. A Paradise employee went onto Trac Plus, their flight following software, and saw a ping from the accident helicopter and noted that it had not moved "in a bit." They were not sure if the helicopter was in the air or not.

Kalei then hung up, spooled up in chopper 1, located at station 14, and flew down to the south side of the island. The plan was originally to stop at North Hawaii Community Hospital to pick up a medic crew but decided instead to pick up a rescue person from fire station 7, Kailua-Kona, instead. As he was passing through Kona airspace to pick up the rescue person, two people from Paradise took off from Kona airport and shot straight to the south point as well. Keith Darby (pilot) and Cody Shoop (mechanic) inside.

Kalei was texting with the chief pilot for Paradise, who had gotten a collision alert from Trac Plus, so at that point Kalei knew it would be a hard landing at least. They continued with very little additional information, until chopper 1, the rescue helicopter, arrived. Chopper 1 found the helicopter pretty close to the latitude and longitude they were given by fire dispatch, also there was a phone call made by a passenger that helped.

Kalei first landed at the staging area, dropped the rescue person he had picked up at Kailua, and picked up a paramedic to take into the site. Chopper 1 was able to land and drop one rescuer and one paramedic personal to assess the scene. There were four ambulatory at that point that they loaded into the helicopter for

transport. The terrain was extremely difficult for carrying patients. They dropped them at Hawaii Ranchos Estates, where there were fire trucks, and two medics (ambulances) staged.

At that point the pilot and passenger 1 were the only two patients left, laying on lava rock, more toward the aft side of the aircraft and towards the water. The pilot was closer to the aircraft. Chopper 2, who had the medical crew got passenger 1 first, as she was the most dire, and took her to the staging area. They then flew back to the site, picked up the pilot, and flew him to staging area.

Once back at the staging area, the pilot was unloaded and passenger 1 was put into chopper 2 to transport to Kona Community Hospital. All other patients were transported via ambulance. All patients were initially treated at Kona Community Hospital, with the pilot and passenger 1 later transported to Queens Medical Center at Honolulu.

The US Coast Guard was not required since HFD had assets located around the island for response. The Coast Guard air base is about a 90-minute flight.