



RECORD OF INTERVIEW

Daniel P. Boggs
Air Safety Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board
Office of Aviation Safety - Eastern Region

Date: 5/26/2021 @ 1000 EDT
Person Interviewed- employee witnesses
NTSB Case Number: ERA21LA164

Narrative:

Mr. Kurt Wegener, David Sellers, and Gabe Alvarado were interviewed in person.

These employees were all standing on the ramp observing the flight test of N9FH on 5/25/2021. They had their cell phones recording the flight passes made. (They will forward all videos they have taken to me.)

All the statements were in agreement that on the 7th pass, the snorkel was swinging, and they all raised their arms and waved them to try and get the attention of the pilot. The pilot did not see them and after transitioning to forward flight, they all heard a loud bang followed by parts falling off the helicopter and then the tail section falling off. The helicopter then rolled and disappeared behind the trees, followed by an explosion and smoke.

Dan Boggs
NTSB



RECORD OF INTERVIEW

Daniel P. Boggs
Air Safety Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board
Office of Aviation Safety - Eastern Region

Date: 5/26/2021 @ 0900 EDT
Person Interviewed- Bart Brainerd-president
NTSB Case Number: ERA21LA164

Narrative:

Mr. Bart Brainerd was interviewed in person.

Mr. Brainerd (Bart) stated they were the developer and owner of STC SR0093DE, internal tank and snorkel system. Bart said the STC was approved in May of 2020 and they just received the first system to be installed on May 17, 2021. After installation was completed on May 22, 2021, several days of ground test and calibration was performed before the first flight test on May 25, 2021. The day of the accident. This was the first flight test with the new system installed on N9FH. Bart said the pilot flew the helicopter on 6 uneventful passes to the lake and back to the airport to dump the water between the runway and taxiway directly in front of the hangar so employee engineers and others could see the performance. On the 7th pass, Bart noticed that the snorkel was swinging more dramatically than any other pass. He and the other employees started to wave their arms at the pilot in order to get his attention and get him to land immediately. The pilot did not see them, so Bart took his phone out and called the tower to radio the pilot and tell him to slow down and land immediately. By the time he communicated to the tower personnel, the helicopter was already transitioning to forward flight and gaining airspeed and altitude. Bart stated that the snorkel was now “violently” swinging as he watch the helicopter fly east. He heard a loud bang followed by pieces of the helicopter falling to the ground. The then saw the tail section fall off. The helicopter started to spin and disappeared behind the trees. He heard an explosion followed by smoke. They called 911 afterwards.

Dan Boggs
NTSB



RECORD OF INTERVIEW

Daniel P. Boggs
Air Safety Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board
Office of Aviation Safety - Eastern Region

Date: 5/26/2021 @ 0930 EDT
Person Interviewed- employee witnesses
NTSB Case Number: ERA21LA164

Narrative:

Mr. Michael Cebe (Mike) was interviewed in person. Mike stated that he was waiting for another helicopter to be fixed and while it was being worked on in maintenance, he was watching from the hangar doors, N9FH perform the testing of the new water tank system. Mike watched as the pilot flew the helicopter down between the runway and taxiway to drop water in front of the hangar. He said on the 7th pass, he was watching the helicopter and heard a loud bang, he then saw an object flying from the helicopter. The helicopter rolled to the left and the tail section came off the fuselage. The nose pitched down and went below the tree line. Mike then heard an explosion and saw smoke coming up from the tree line.

Dan Boggs
NTSB