



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Johnson River, Alaska	Accident Number:	ANC23LA085
Date & Time:	September 16, 2023, 10:10 Local	Registration:	N297SH
Aircraft:	Eurocopter AS 350 B3	Aircraft Damage:	None
Defining Event:	External load event (Rotorcraft)	Injuries:	1 Serious, 1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 133: Rotorcraft ext. load		

Analysis

The operator reported that during a sling load operation, one of the ground crew became entangled in a tag line as the helicopter began to lift the load. He was dragged across the deck, freed himself, and subsequently fell to the ground. In the operators written statement, it was noted the ground crew member was initially hidden from the pilot’s view as he began to lift the sling load. The helicopter was not damaged, but the ground crew personnel sustained serious injuries. The operator reported no mechanical malfunctions or failures with the helicopter that would have precluded normal operation.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

The ground crew’s failure to remain clear of a tag line during sling load operations, resulting in his entanglement.

Findings

Environmental issues	Ground equipment - Contributed to outcome
Personnel issues	Use of policy/procedure - Ground crew

Factual Information

History of Flight

Maneuvering-hover	External load event (Rotorcraft) (Defining event)
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Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	56, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	4-point
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	October 10, 2022
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	April 24, 2023
Flight Time:	15300 hours (Total, all aircraft), 9500 hours (Total, this make and model), 15200 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 260 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 100 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 3 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Eurocopter	Registration:	N297SH
Model/Series:	AS 350 B3	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:	2012	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	7429
Landing Gear Type:	High skid	Seats:	6
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	August 18, 2023 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	5225 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Turbo shaft
Airframe Total Time:	1480 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	Safran
ELT:	C126 installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	Arriel 2D
Registered Owner:	JC AIRCRAFT LEASING LLC	Rated Power:	952 Horsepower
Operator:	Soloy Helicopters LLC	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	Rotorcraft external load (133), Agricultural aircraft (137)

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:		Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:		Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown / 10000 ft AGL	Visibility	
Lowest Ceiling:		Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	10°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	Johnson River, AK	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Johnson River, AK	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:		Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	None
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious, 1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	60.15,-152.9

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Joyce, Stacia
Additional Participating Persons:	Paula Huckelberry; FAA; AK
Original Publish Date:	May 3, 2024
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 4
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=193130

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person” (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available [here](#).