



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Skwentna, Alaska	Accident Number:	ANC25LA097
Date & Time:	August 20, 2025, 14:30 Local	Registration:	N589SH
Aircraft:	Airbus Helicopters AS350B3e	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Miscellaneous/other	Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 133: Rotorcraft ext. load		

Analysis

The operator reported that the helicopter was being used to sling construction equipment to a remote mine site located in an area of steep mountainous terrain. After the pilot placed the external load at a prearranged site next to the drill pad, he maneuvered the helicopter to a landing site in an area of rock-covered terrain to disconnect and stow the lightweight Kevlar long line that was still attached to the helicopter’s cargo hook. After a successful landing, the pilot reduced the engine throttle to ground idle, locked the flight controls, then exited the helicopter with the engine and rotor still operating. As the pilot coiled the Kevlar long line into the helicopter, a portion of the line became entangled in the rock covered terrain, and the pilot pulled hard to free it. As the Kevlar long line suddenly released from the rocks, the recoiling line became entangled in the operating main rotor blades which resulted in a severe main rotor imbalance. As a result, the main rotor gearbox and entire main rotor system were subsequently ripped from the helicopter. The helicopter sustained substantial damage to the fuselage, tail boom assembly, and main rotor drive system. The pilot reported that there were no preaccident mechanical failures or malfunctions 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 pilot's inadvertent entanglement of a lightweight Kevlar long line into the helicopters operating main rotor system, resulting in a severe imbalance and separation of the main rotor gearbox.

Findings

Personnel issues	Incorrect action performance - Pilot
Environmental issues	Rough terrain - Effect on operation

Factual Information

History of Flight

Standing-engine(s) operating	Miscellaneous/other (Defining event)
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Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	58, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	None
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	Unknown
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 2 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	March 26, 2025
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	March 25, 2025
Flight Time:	15500 hours (Total, all aircraft), 9900 hours (Total, this make and model), 15400 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 290 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 50 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Airbus Helicopters	Registration:	N589SH
Model/Series:	AS350B3e	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:	2013	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	7745
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	Seats:	6
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	August 9, 2025 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	4961 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	5 Hrs	Engines:	1 Turbo shaft
Airframe Total Time:	5664.5 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	SAFRAN
ELT:	C126 installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	ARRIEL 2D
Registered Owner:	CSC DELAWARE TRUST CO TRUSTEE	Rated Power:	
Operator:	Soloy Helicopters LLC	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	Rotorcraft external load (133), On-demand air taxi (135)

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	APT,1858 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	21 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	10:57 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	20°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 2700 ft AGL	Visibility	25 miles
Lowest Ceiling:		Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	None / None
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	30.12 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	13°C / 11°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Skwentna , AK	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	Company VFR
Destination:	Skwentna , AK	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:		Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	61.769167,-152.98693(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Johnson, Clinton
Additional Participating Persons:	Paula Huckleberry; Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) ; Wasilla , AK
Original Publish Date:	October 23, 2025
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=200883

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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](#).