



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

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<b>Location:</b>	Silver City, New Mexico	<b>Accident Number:</b>	WPR21LA027
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	October 26, 2020, 23:37 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N530H
<b>Aircraft:</b>	AMERICAN EUROCOPTER AS350B3	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>	Collision during takeoff/land	<b>Injuries:</b>	1 Minor
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Positioning		

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## Analysis

The pilot reported that the purpose of the flight was to relocate the helicopter to a hangar at a nearby airport before a winter storm impacted the area. The pilot took off in moderate visual meteorological conditions and moderate rain; but as the helicopter neared the airport, the precipitation turned from rain to snow. The pilot turned final about 1 mile north of the airport when the precipitation increased, and the visibility reduced. The helicopter impacted terrain about 200 yards north of the runway surface in a mostly level attitude before it rolled onto its left side. The fuselage was substantially damaged. The pilot reported that there were no preaccident no 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 failure to maintain sufficient altitude above terrain while operating in reduced visibility due to snow showers.

## Findings

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<b>Personnel issues</b>	Decision making/judgment - Pilot
<b>Aircraft</b>	Altitude - Not attained/maintained
<b>Environmental issues</b>	Snow - Effect on operation

## Factual Information

### History of Flight

<b>Approach-VFR pattern final</b>	Other weather encounter
<b>Approach-VFR pattern final</b>	Collision during takeoff/land (Defining event)

### Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Commercial; Flight instructor	<b>Age:</b>	53, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Right
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	Helicopter	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	4-point
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	Helicopter	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	Helicopter; Instrument helicopter	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 2 With waivers/limitations	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	July 13, 2020
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	Yes	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	May 16, 2020
<b>Flight Time:</b>	4200 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1956 hours (Total, this make and model), 4100 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 68 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 19 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

### Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	AMERICAN EUROCOPTER	<b>Registration:</b>	N530H
<b>Model/Series:</b>	AS350B3	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Helicopter
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>	2008	<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	4553
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	High skid	<b>Seats:</b>	4
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	October 26, 2020 AAIP	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	5225 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>	175 Hrs	<b>Engines:</b>	1 Turbo shaft
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	7706 Hrs at time of accident	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Turbomeca
<b>ELT:</b>	C126 installed, not activated	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	Arriel 2B1
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	AIR METHODS CORP	<b>Rated Power:</b>	847 Horsepower
<b>Operator:</b>	AIR METHODS CORP	<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	On-demand air taxi (135)

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual (VMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Night
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	SVC,5446 ft msl	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	8 Nautical Miles
<b>Observation Time:</b>	23:37 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	160°
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Clear	<b>Visibility</b>	7 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	Broken / 1300 ft AGL	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	9 knots /	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	None / None
<b>Wind Direction:</b>	110°	<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	N/A / N/A
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	29.89 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	3°C / 3°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	Moderate - None - Rain		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	Silver City, NM (NM85)	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	Company VFR
<b>Destination:</b>	Silver City, NM (94E)	<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>	11:34 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class G

## Airport Information

<b>Airport:</b>	Whiskey Creek Airport 94E	<b>Runway Surface Type:</b>	Asphalt
<b>Airport Elevation:</b>	6126 ft msl	<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	Snow
<b>Runway Used:</b>	17	<b>IFR Approach:</b>	None
<b>Runway Length/Width:</b>	5400 ft / 50 ft	<b>VFR Approach/Landing:</b>	Straight-in

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 Minor	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>		<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>		<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	1 Minor	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	32.769381,-108.21173

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Link, Samantha
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	Michael Petrofes; Federal Aviation Administration; Albuquerque, NM
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	August 20, 2021
<b>Last Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Investigation Class:</b>	<a href="#">Class 4</a>
<b>Note:</b>	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	<a href="https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=102200">https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=102200</a>

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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](#).