



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Merced, California	Accident Number:	WPR22LA140
Date & Time:	April 1, 2022, 12:15 Local	Registration:	N9287U
Aircraft:	Bell OH-58A	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)	Injuries:	1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 137: Agricultural		

Analysis

The pilot in the helicopter reported that, he was conducting an agricultural aerial application flight. Before he started the spray operation, he overflowed the field to identify obstacles. While approaching the northeast corner of the fields from the south, he overflowed one set of wires, “ducked down” into the corner to spray, and pulled up as he approached the edge of the field. As he pulled up, he saw wires he had not seen before and tried to hit them with the wire cutter installed on the helicopter. The helicopter impacted the wires, descended, and impacted the ground. The helicopter sustained substantial damage to the fuselage. 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 failure to see and avoid wires while conducting an aerial application flight, which resulted in a wire strike and ground impact.

Findings

Personnel issues	Monitoring environment - Pilot
Environmental issues	Wire - Effect on operation

Factual Information

History of Flight

Maneuvering-low-alt flying	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT) (Defining event)
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Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	62, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	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 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	February 15, 2022
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	February 16, 2022
Flight Time:	2336 hours (Total, all aircraft), 647 hours (Total, this make and model), 1970 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 35 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 35 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 4.2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Bell	Registration:	N9287U
Model/Series:	OH-58A	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:	1971	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Restricted (Special)	Serial Number:	71-20428
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	February 28, 2022 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3200 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	178 Hrs	Engines:	1 Turbo shaft
Airframe Total Time:	6369 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Rolls Royce
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	250-C2-OC
Registered Owner:	AMERICAN AG AVIATION INC	Rated Power:	420 Horsepower
Operator:	AMERICAN AG AVIATION INC	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	Agricultural aircraft (137)

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KMCE,153 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	10 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	12:53 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	55°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/ None	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	332°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.93 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	22°C / 3°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:		Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:		Type of Airspace:	Unknown

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	37.189404,-120.68928

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Baker, Daniel
Additional Participating Persons:	Jason Alves; FAA-FSDO; Fresno, CA
Original Publish Date:	July 13, 2022
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=104882

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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](#).