



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

<b>Location:</b>	Fort White, Florida	<b>Accident Number:</b>	ERA22LA180
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	April 2, 2022, 10:30 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N7057L
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Hughes 269A	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)	<b>Injuries:</b>	2 Minor
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

## Analysis

The weather when the non-instrument-rated helicopter pilot initiated the flight included a ceiling of 250 ft mean sea level (msl) and visibility of 1/2 mile, which corresponded to instrument meteorological conditions. After flying for 15 minutes, the helicopter “entered a wall of fog.” The pilot attempted to turn the helicopter around and return to an area of better visibility; however, the tail rotor impacted trees. The pilot did not realize that the helicopter was in a right turn and reduced engine power. The helicopter descended to ground in a bank, which resulted in substantial damage to the fuselage, tailboom, and rotor blades. The pilot reported no preimpact mechanical malfunctions or failures with the helicopter that would have precluded normal operation. According to the helicopter owner’s maintenance and flight manual, “instrument flight [is] prohibited.”

## Probable Cause and Findings

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

The non-instrument-rated pilot’s decision to fly a visual flight rules only helicopter in instrument meteorological conditions, which resulted in a collision with trees and terrain.

## Findings

---

<b>Personnel issues</b>	Decision making/judgment - Pilot
<b>Aircraft</b>	Instrument flight capability - Related operating info
<b>Environmental issues</b>	Below VFR minima - Effect on operation
<b>Personnel issues</b>	Total instrument experience - Pilot

## Factual Information

### History of Flight

<b>Maneuvering-low-alt flying</b>	Other weather encounter
<b>Maneuvering-low-alt flying</b>	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT) (Defining event)

### Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Private	<b>Age:</b>	75, 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>	None	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	BasicMed With waivers/limitations	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	April 25, 2018
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	No	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	
<b>Flight Time:</b>			

### Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Hughes	<b>Registration:</b>	N7057L
<b>Model/Series:</b>	269A	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Helicopter
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>	1967	<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	1281052
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Skid	<b>Seats:</b>	2
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	September 1, 2021 Annual	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>	6.3 Hrs	<b>Engines:</b>	1 Reciprocating
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	13948.2 Hrs as of last inspection	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Lycoming
<b>ELT:</b>	Installed	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	HIO-360-B1A
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	TRI COUNTY RENTALS AND SALES INC	<b>Rated Power:</b>	180 Horsepower
<b>Operator:</b>	TRI COUNTY RENTALS AND SALES INC	<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Instrument (IMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	GNV,134 ft msl	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	29 Nautical Miles
<b>Observation Time:</b>	09:35 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	129°
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>		<b>Visibility</b>	0.25 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	Indefinite (V V) / 200 ft AGL	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	4 knots /	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Wind Direction:</b>	100°	<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	30.04 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	18°C / 18°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	Moderate - None - Fog		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	Lake City, FL (15FL)	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	None
<b>Destination:</b>	Trenton, FL	<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>	10:15 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class G

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 Minor	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>	1 Minor	<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	2 Minor	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	29.992609,-82.709709(est)

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Kemner, Heidi
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	John Clark; FAA/FSDO; Orlando, FL
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	July 1, 2022
<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=104895">https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=104895</a>

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](#).