



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Lake Apopka, Florida	Accident Number:	ERA22LA206
Date & Time:	April 26, 2022, 07:16 Local	Registration:	N206BX
Aircraft:	Bell 206	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)	Injuries:	1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 137: Agricultural		

Analysis

The pilot of the helicopter departed the landing zone to conduct an aerial application flight over a lake. He stated that he established course on his spray line but “lost sight of everything looking forward due to the glare off the water and the sun position.” He recalled having no depth perception when he looked down at the water and could not recall the helicopter impacting the water but recalled a momentary shudder followed by the helicopter coming to rest inverted. The helicopter’s fuselage, main and tail rotor blades were substantially damaged during the impact. The pilot reported that there were no preimpact mechanical malfunctions or failures of 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:

A collision with water following a loss of visual reference to the water surface due to sun glare.

Findings

Aircraft	Altitude - Not attained/maintained
Environmental issues	Glare - Effect on personnel
Personnel issues	Visual illusion/disorientation - Pilot

Factual Information

History of Flight

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

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline transport; Commercial	Age:	55, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	4-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane; Helicopter	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane multi-engine; Airplane single-engine; Helicopter; Instrument airplane	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 1 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	August 11, 2021
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	March 22, 2022
Flight Time:	10725 hours (Total, all aircraft), 3087 hours (Total, this make and model), 6777 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 148 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 65 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 5 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Bell	Registration:	N206BX
Model/Series:	206 B	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:	1979	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal; Restricted (Special)	Serial Number:	2872
Landing Gear Type:	None; High skid	Seats:	5
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	February 1, 2022 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3200 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	21 Hrs	Engines:	1 Turbo shaft
Airframe Total Time:	12575 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Rolls Royce
ELT:	C126 installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	M250C20B
Registered Owner:	COASTAL HELICOPTERS INC	Rated Power:	420 Horsepower
Operator:	COASTAL AIR SERVICE, 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:	ORL,112 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	17 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	07:53 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	93°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.15 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	21°C / 18°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Lake Apopka, FL	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Lake Apopka, FL	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:		Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	28.562433,-81.66275(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Wentz, Peter
Additional Participating Persons:	John Breen; FAA - FSDO; Orlando, FL
Original Publish Date:	October 13, 2022
Last Revision Date:	November 6, 2024
Investigation Class:	Class 4
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=105003

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](#).