



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	EVERGREEN, Colorado	Accident Number:	DEN92LA001
Date & Time:	October 2, 1991, 17:00 Local	Registration:	N552H
Aircraft:	ENSTROM F-28C	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

THE PILOT SAID HE LIFTED THE HELICOPTER OFF THE GROUND BUT BEFORE TRANSLATIONAL LIFT WAS ACHIEVED, HE ENCOUNTERED A SUDDEN DOWNDRAFT. THE PILOT MADE A CONTROLLED CRASH BETWEEN TREES IN MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH A SUDDEN DOWNDRAFT. A FACTOR WAS: THE PILOT'S LACK OF TOTAL EXPERIENCE IN AIRCRAFT TYPE.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - INITIAL CLIMB

Findings

1. (C) WEATHER CONDITION - DOWNDRAFT
2. (F) LACK OF TOTAL EXPERIENCE IN TYPE OF AIRCRAFT - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: LANDING - FLARE/TOUCHDOWN

Findings

3. TERRAIN CONDITION - MOUNTAINOUS/HILLY

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline transport; Commercial; Flight engineer	Age:	52, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Unknown
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):		Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 1 Valid Medical-w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	September 4, 1991
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	16000 hours (Total, all aircraft), 80 hours (Total, this make and model), 12000 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 180 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 42 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	ENSTROM	Registration:	N552H
Model/Series:	F-28C F-28C	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:		Serial Number:	347
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	Seats:	3
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Unknown	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2350 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	0 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	H10-360-E14D
Registered Owner:	JAMES B. HIGHBANKS	Rated Power:	205 Horsepower
Operator:	JAMES B. HIGHBANKS	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:		Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:		Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	50 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	0°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	-18°C / -18°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:		Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	17:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	39.629707,-105.339904(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Scott, Arnold
Additional Participating Persons:	JACK MIDDLETON; DENVER , CO
Original Publish Date:	May 5, 1993
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=18174

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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](#).