



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Hana, Hawaii	Accident Number:	ANC24LA016
Date & Time:	February 20, 2024, 09:15 Local	Registration:	N690WA
Aircraft:	Hughes 369D	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)	Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Public aircraft		

Analysis

The pilot reported that after landing at a remote landing zone (LZ) to pick up a single passenger, the passenger loaded their gear in the aft right seat and secured it with a seatbelt. While enroute, the two occupants heard a “loud and violent bang” and the nose of the helicopter moved to the right and vibrations followed. The pilot looked back at the tail rotor, saw it was spinning freely, and confirmed the tail rotor drive train had failed. The pilot performed an autorotation to an open field. A post flight inspection revealed that the passenger’s rain pants were missing from the aft right seat. It was determined that the rain pants had exited the helicopter and impacted the tail rotor resulting in substantial damage to the fuselage, tail boom, horizontal stabilizer and tail rotor assembly and gearbox. The pilot stated that there were no preimpact mechanical malfunctions or failures 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 ensure the passenger’s gear was properly secured before departure.

Findings

Personnel issues	Preflight inspection - Pilot
Personnel issues	Expectation/assumption - Pilot
Personnel issues	Understanding/comprehension - Passenger

Factual Information

History of Flight

Enroute	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT) (Defining event)
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Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	32, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	4-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Helicopter	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 2 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	January 8, 2024
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	December 4, 2023
Flight Time:	3488 hours (Total, all aircraft), 2412 hours (Total, this make and model), 3425 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 132 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 43 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Passenger Information

Certificate:		Age:	52, Male
Airplane Rating(s):		Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):		Restraint Used:	4-point
Instrument Rating(s):		Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):		Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:		Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:			

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Hughes	Registration:	N690WA
Model/Series:	369D	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:	1978	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	1170237D
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	Seats:	5
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	February 12, 2024 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3000 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	20.2 Hrs	Engines:	1 Turbo shaft
Airframe Total Time:	22452.3 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	ROLLS-ROYC
ELT:	C126 installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	250-C20B
Registered Owner:	WINDWARD AVIATION INC	Rated Power:	420 Horsepower
Operator:	WINDWARD AVIATION INC	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	Rotorcraft external load (133), On-demand air taxi (135), Agricultural aircraft (137), Certificate of authorization or waiver (COA)
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	WVXA

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	PHOG,46 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	25 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	09:54 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	304°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 5000 ft AGL	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:		Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	Unknown / Terrain-Induced
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	Unknown / Light
Altimeter Setting:	30.2 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	24°C / 12°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Kahului, HI (PHOG)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	Company VFR
Destination:	Kahului, HI (PHOG)	Type of Clearance:	VFR
Departure Time:	08:43 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class E,Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	20.671167,-156.05866

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Ward, Mark
Additional Participating Persons:	Seth Cossel; FAA; Honolulu, HI Anfrew Rasmussen; FAA; Honolulu, HI
Original Publish Date:	December 2, 2024
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=193819

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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](#).