



Aviation Investigation Preliminary Report

Location:	Kekaha, HI	Accident Number:	ANC24LA017
Date & Time:	February 27, 2024, 13:30 Local	Registration:	N633JH
Aircraft:	MD Helicopter 369E/500E	Injuries:	1 Serious, 4 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 135: Air taxi & commuter - Non-scheduled - Sightseeing		

On February 27, 2024, about 1330 Hawaii-Aleutian standard time, an MD Helicopter 369E, N633JH, was substantially damaged when it was involved in an accident on a remote beach about 14 miles north of Kekaha, Hawaii, on the island of Kauai. The pilot and three passengers sustained minor injuries, and one passenger sustained serious injuries. The helicopter was operated as a *Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations* Part 135 sightseeing flight.

According to the pilot, while conducting a doors-off, helicopter sightseeing flight near the northern shoreline on the island of Kauai, the pilot said he initially smelled smoke and he immediately began flying to an area known as Kalalau Beach, which is the operator's predetermined helicopter emergency landing zone along the prearranged tour route. He reported that very shortly thereafter, he heard a loud "pop", followed by the engine out aural warning tone. The pilot immediately lowered the collective control and entered an autorotation to land at a nearby smaller, remote beach, known as Honopu Beach, as an emergency landing site. As the helicopter touched down on the sand-covered beach, it rocked forward and nosed down into the sand. The helicopter then rolled to the right and came to rest on its side which resulted in substantial damage to the tail boom, fuselage, and main rotor system.

The helicopter wreckage was subsequently recovered from the remote beach site and transported to a secure location in Lihue, Hawaii. An initial Federal Aviation Administration postaccident examination revealed that the overrunning clutch and engine-to-transmission driveshaft were fractured. See Figure 1



Figure 1: Fractured main rotor drive shaft (Courtesy of FAA)

Two investigators from the National Transportation Safety Board's (NTSB) Alaska Regional Office, along with a helicopter aerospace engineer from Washington D.C., responded to Lihue to examine the helicopter wreckage. During the detailed on-scene examination, the investigative team retained various components for additional examination and testing, and results are pending.

In the pilot's written statement, dated March 7, 2024, he credited the successful, power off emergency approach and landing on the small beach site, to the operators enhanced touchdown autorotation training.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	MD Helicopter	Registration:	N633JH
Model/Series:	369E/500E	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Amateur Built:			
Operator:	JACK HARTER HELICOPTERS INC	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	On-demand air taxi (135)
Operator Designator Code:			

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	VMC	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	PHBK, 12 ft msl	Observation Time:	12:51 Local
Distance from Accident Site:	10 Nautical Miles	Temperature/Dew Point:	27°C / 15°C
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	7 knots / None, 290°
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility:	10 miles
Altimeter Setting:	30.15 inches Hg	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	CVFR
Departure Point:	Lihue, HI (LIH)	Destination:	Lihue, HI (LIH)

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Serious, 3 Minor	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious, 4 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	22.166129,-159.67218 (est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Rasmussen, Mitchell
Additional Participating Persons:	Andrew Rasmussen ; FAA - FSDO; Honolulu, HI Patrick Lusch; Federal Aviation Administration - AVP 100; Washington DC, DC
Investigation Class:	Class 3
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.