



Aviation Investigation Preliminary Report

Location:	Spring Branch, TX	Accident Number:	CEN24FA167
Date & Time:	April 29, 2024, 15:13 Local	Registration:	N829SH
Aircraft:	Vertical Aviation Technologies Hummingbird	Injuries:	2 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Air drop		

On April 29, 2024, about 1513 central daylight time, a Vertical Aviation Technologies Hummingbird 260L helicopter, N829SH, was destroyed when it was involved in an accident near Spring Branch, Texas. The airline transport pilot and the pilot-rated passenger sustained fatal injuries. The helicopter was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91 air drop flight.

The purpose of the flight was to perform a charity golf ball drop at the River Crossing Club (a private golf club), in Spring Branch, Texas. The helicopter departed from the Kestrel Airpark (1T7), Spring Branch, Texas, for the local area flight. Security camera footage showed the helicopter impact a grass field in a residential area, in front of a house. A postimpact explosion and fire occurred, which consumed the wreckage. There were no ground injuries. The NTSB and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) responded to the accident site.

According to FAA records, the pilot was also the owner and builder of the experimental helicopter. The helicopter was built in 2012 and is based on the Sikorsky S-52 series helicopter design per the kit manufacturer. According to the pilot's family, he was a retired U.S. Air Force pilot who flew the Sikorsky MH-53 series helicopter.

The helicopter was equipped with a General Motors LS7 (V8, 7.0 liter) automotive engine. An Appareo Stratus unit and the pilot's Garmin D2 watch were recovered from the wreckage and were shipped to the NTSB Vehicle Recorders Laboratory.

The estimated density altitude for the closest meteorological reporting station was 3,268 ft.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Vertical Aviation Technologies	Registration:	N829SH
Model/Series:	Hummingbird 260L	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Amateur Built:	Yes		
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Designator Code:	None		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	VMC	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KBAZ, 648 ft msl	Observation Time:	14:51 Local
Distance from Accident Site:	22 Nautical Miles	Temperature/Dew Point:	33°C / 21°C
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 4700 ft AGL	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	/ None
Lowest Ceiling:		Visibility:	10 miles
Altimeter Setting:	29.83 inches Hg	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	NONE
Departure Point:	Spring Branch, TX (1T7)	Destination:	Spring Branch, TX (1T7)

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	On-ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	On-ground
Total Injuries:	2 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	29.828998,-98.446451 (est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Hodges, Michael
Additional Participating Persons:	Jeffrey Johnson; FAA San Antonio FSDO; San Antonio, TX Bradley Clark; Vertical Aviation Technologies; Sanford, FL
Investigation Class:	Class 3
Note:	