



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	FIREBAUGH, California	Accident Number:	LAX88DVA05
Date & Time:	May 9, 1988, 10:00 Local	Registration:	N117HA
Aircraft:	HILLER 12E	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 137: Agricultural		

Analysis

DURING AN AERIAL APPLICATION, THE HELICOPTER COLLIDED WITH A GUY WIRE AND THEN A FIELD. THE PILOT KNEW THAT THE WIRE WAS THERE. HE STATED THAT HE SIMPLY FORGOT THAT IT WAS THERE AND DID NOT SEE IT. THERE WERE NO MECHANICAL PROBLEMS PRIOR TO THE ACCIDENT.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING - AERIAL APPLICATION

Findings

1. (F) OBJECT - GUY WIRE
2. (C) VISUAL LOOKOUT - POOR - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) COMPLACENCY - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	52, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Center
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical-w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	March 9, 1988
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	19400 hours (Total, all aircraft), 6050 hours (Total, this make and model), 19150 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 100 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	HILLER	Registration:	N117HA
Model/Series:	12E 12E	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Restricted (Special)	Serial Number:	HA 3017
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	Seats:	3
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	August 8, 1987 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2800 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	79 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	4569 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	VO-540
Registered Owner:	PATTERSON FLYING SERVICE	Rated Power:	225 Horsepower
Operator:	PATTERSON FLYING SERVICE	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	RPNG

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	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	5 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	0°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	21°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:		Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	09:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	36.84972,-120.540519(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Gibbons, Cliff

Additional Participating Persons:

Original Publish Date: July 26, 1989

Last Revision Date:

Investigation Class: [Class](#)

Note:

Investigation Docket: <https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=25744>

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](#).