



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	BAKERSFIELD, California	Accident Number:	LAX88LA153
Date & Time:	April 4, 1988, 13:58 Local	Registration:	N646JS
Aircraft:	HILLER UH-12D	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Ferry		

Analysis

THE HELICOPTER ENCOUNTERED WEATHER WHILE ENROUTE TO ITS DEST AND DIVERTED TO AN ALTERNATE ARPT. IT OVERFLEW THE ALTERNATE AND, AFTER THE ENGINE FAILED FROM FUEL EXHAUSTION, CRASHED DURING AN AUTOROTATIVE FORCED LANDING.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER(TOTAL) - NONMECHANICAL
Phase of Operation: CRUISE - NORMAL

Findings

1. (C) FLUID,FUEL - EXHAUSTION
2. (C) IN-FLIGHT PLANNING/DECISION - POOR - PILOT IN COMMAND

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

Occurrence #3: HARD LANDING
Phase of Operation: LANDING - FLARE/TOUCHDOWN

Findings

3. (C) AUTOROTATION - IMPROPER - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	35, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Center
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 1 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	December 21, 1987
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	8168 hours (Total, all aircraft), 85 hours (Total, this make and model), 8023 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 114 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 85 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 5 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	HILLER	Registration:	N646JS
Model/Series:	UH-12D UH-12D	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal; Restricted (Special)	Serial Number:	1299
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	Seats:	3
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	August 10, 1987 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2750 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	80 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	4010 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	VO-540-C2A
Registered Owner:	SMITH, JAMES R	Rated Power:	305 Horsepower
Operator:	WEST FARM AIR INC.	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	
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:	BLF ,507 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	7 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	14:15 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	360°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 3800 ft AGL	Visibility	30 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	11 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	270°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	23°C / 9°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	HURON , CA (3CA4)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	LANCASTER , CA (WJF)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	11:45 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	BAKERSFIELD MUNI L45	Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:	778 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	Forced landing

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:	35.380546,-119.019989(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Wall, James
Additional Participating Persons:	JOHN MOYER; FRESNO , CA
Original Publish Date:	January 24, 1990
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=25980

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](#).