



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	DAVIS, California	Accident Number:	LAX92FA047
Date & Time:	November 20, 1991, 18:14 Local	Registration:	N5011K
Aircraft:	BELL 206BIII	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	3 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 135: Air taxi & commuter - Non-scheduled		

Analysis

A BELL HELICOPTER 206B III COLLIDED WITH LEVEL TERRAIN DURING NIGHT INSTRUMENT METEOROLOGICAL CONDITIONS. THE PILOT CONTACTED AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL TWENTY MILES SOUTHEAST OF HIS DESTINATION REPORTING INSTRUMENT METEOROLOGICAL CONDITIONS WITH LOW VISIBILITY IN LIGHT RAIN SHOWERS. THE PILOT WAS UNABLE TO MAINTAIN VFR CONDITIONS AND STARTED TO MANEUVER AROUND THE WEATHER. A WITNESS REPORTED SEEING THE HELICOPTER FLYING NORTH, AT AN ALTITUDE BELOW THE LEVEL OF AN INTERSTATE HIGHWAY. THE HELICOPTER HAD TO CLIMB TO CROSS THE INTERSTATE. THE HELICOPTER THEN DESCENDED, IMPACTED THE GROUND, AND DISINTEGRATED. ATC REPORTED LOST RADAR CONTACT WITH THE HELICOPTER. THE SEARCH FOR THE HELICOPTER WAS IMPEDED BY LOCAL DARKNESS AND GROUND FOG. THE PILOT'S DESTINATION AIRPORT LOCATED EIGHT NAUTICAL MILES NORTH OF THE ACCIDENT SITE WAS REPORTING A TEMPERATURE DEWPOINT SPREAD OF THREE DEGREES AND CALM WINDS.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE DECISION OF THE PILOT TO CONTINUE NIGHT LOW LEVEL FLIGHT IN FORECASTED ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS. CONTRIBUTING TO THE ACCIDENT WAS THE FOGGY WEATHER AND DARK NIGHT CONDITIONS WHICH RESTRICTED THE PILOT'S VISUAL OUTLOOK.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER

Phase of Operation: CRUISE

Findings

1. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - DARK NIGHT
2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - FOG
3. (C) FLIGHT INTO KNOWN ADVERSE WEATHER - INTENTIONAL - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (C) IN-FLIGHT PLANNING/DECISION - POOR - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. (F) VISUAL LOOKOUT - RESTRICTED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial; Flight instructor	Age:	35, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Helicopter	Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	April 19, 1991
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	1058 hours (Total, all aircraft), 222 hours (Total, this make and model), 815 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 189 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 73 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	BELL	Registration:	N5011K
Model/Series:	206BIII 206BIII	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal; Utility	Serial Number:	2580
Landing Gear Type:	High skid	Seats:	5
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	November 20, 1991 AAIP	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3200 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	15 Hrs	Engines:	1 Turbo shaft
Airframe Total Time:	7949 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	ALLISON
ELT:	Installed, activated, aided in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	250-C20B
Registered Owner:	ARIS HELICOPTER LTD	Rated Power:	420 Horsepower
Operator:	ARIS HELICOPTER LTD	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	On-demand air taxi (135)
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	CAXA

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument (IMC)	Condition of Light:	Night/dark
Observation Facility, Elevation:	SMF ,23 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	8 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	17:46 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	342°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 2300 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	0°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	13°C / 11°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	Light - None - Rain		
Departure Point:	SAN FRANCISCO (SFO)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	SACRAMENTO (SMF)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	17:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class E

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 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	2 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	3 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	38.529457,-121.660804(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Wilcox, Thomas

Additional Participating Persons: RICHARD CONTE; SACRAMENTO , CA
RICK GLEASON; SAN JOSE , CA
JOSEPH ASYSLO; FORT WORTH , TX
ROBERT E GREGORY; INDIANAPOLIS , IN

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Last Revision Date:

Investigation Class: [Class](#)

Note:

Investigation Docket: <https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=27391>

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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](#).