



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	WATSONVILLE, California	Accident Number:	LAX92LA152
Date & Time:	March 27, 1992, 05:35 Local	Registration:	N149HA
Aircraft:	HILLER UH-12E	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 137: Agricultural		

Analysis

THE CERTIFICATED COMMERCIAL PILOT WAS CONDUCTING AERIAL SPRAY OPERATIONS IN A HELICOPTER. ABOUT 30 MINUTES AFTER DEPARTING A NEARBY AIRPORT, THE PILOT WAS TAKING OFF FROM A FIELD TO BEGIN APPLYING THE THIRD LOAD OF AN INSECTICIDE. ABOUT 100 YARDS FROM THE TAKEOFF POINT, THE HELICOPTER'S ENGINE SUDDENLY LOST POWER AND SOUNDED AS IF IT WAS MISFIRING. THE HELICOPTER BEGAN TO DESCEND AND THE PILOT FLARED THE HELICOPTER TO SLOW THE ITS FORWARD MOTION. THE TAIL ROTOR STRUCK THE GROUND AND THE HELICOPTER THEN SETTLED INTO THE FIELD, COLLAPSING THE LANDING GEAR SKIDS. THE WRECKAGE EXAMINATION AT THE ACCIDENT SITE REVEALED WATER IN THE MAIN FUEL SUMP. A POST ACCIDENT EXAMINATION OF THE ENGINE REVEALED CONTAMINATION IN THE FUEL SUMP AND LEFT CARBURETOR SCREEN.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: A FAILURE OF THE PILOT TO CONDUCT AN ADEQUATE PRE-FLIGHT INSPECTION OF THE AIRCRAFT TO ENSURE THAT THE FUEL SUPPLY WAS FREE OF CONTAMINATES. CONTRIBUTING TO THIS ACCIDENT WAS FUEL CONTAMINATION.

Findings

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

Findings

1. (F) FLUID,FUEL - CONTAMINATION
2. (C) AIRCRAFT PREFLIGHT - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

Occurrence #3: HARD LANDING

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

Findings

3. TERRAIN CONDITION - OPEN FIELD
4. LANDING GEAR,SKID ASSEMBLY - COLLAPSED

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	33, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-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--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	October 2, 1991
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	7300 hours (Total, all aircraft), 2800 hours (Total, this make and model), 7200 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 75 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 30 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	HILLER	Registration:	N149HA
Model/Series:	UH-12E UH-12E	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Restricted (Special)	Serial Number:	HA-3049
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	Seats:	3
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	December 5, 1991 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3100 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	70 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	4814 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	VO-540-CSA
Registered Owner:	HELICAIR AG INC.	Rated Power:	305 Horsepower
Operator:	HELICAIR AG INC.	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	LSMG

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Dawn
Observation Facility, Elevation:	SNS ,84 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	15 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	05:50 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	135°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown	Visibility	5 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 800 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	4 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	270°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	13°C / 12°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	N/A - None - Fog		
Departure Point:	SALINAS , CA (SNS)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	05:05 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:	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:	36.950851,-121.719688(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Erickson, Scott
Additional Participating Persons:	CYNTHIA JESCH; SAN JOSE , CA ASI REIGH R. GRANLUND; SAN JOSE , CA
Original Publish Date:	August 26, 1993
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=27582

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