



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	KING CITY, California	Accident Number:	LAX97LA006
Date & Time:	October 7, 1996, 11:40 Local	Registration:	N8135J
Aircraft:	Bell 47G-5A	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 137: Agricultural		

Analysis

According to the pilot, he refilled his restricted category helicopter with 80 gallons of defoliant and proceeded to take off from a farm field adjacent to a country road. He had made two previous departures from the same location and was aware of nearby power lines. During the climb over the power lines, the pilot allowed the engine, rotor rpm, and airspeed to decrease. The pilot further indicated that he attempted to regain airspeed and rpm by lowering the nose of the helicopter. His efforts were not successful, and the helicopter made a hard touchdown in the field.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the pilot's failure to maintain adequate rotor rpm during the takeoff initial climb.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: CLIMB - TO CRUISE

Findings

1. OBJECT - WIRE, TRANSMISSION
 2. (C) ROTOR RPM - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
 3. REMEDIAL ACTION - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #2: HARD LANDING
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Factual Information

On October 7, 1996, at 1140 hours Pacific daylight time, a Bell 47G-5A, N8135J, crashed into a field near King City, California, during an aerial application flight. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and no flight plan was filed. The helicopter was substantially damaged and the commercial pilot was not injured. The flight originated from King City about 0700.

According to the pilot, he refilled his restricted category helicopter with 80 gallons of defoliant and proceeded to take off from a farm field adjacent to a country road. He had made two previous departures from the same location and was aware of nearby power lines. During the climb over the power lines, the pilot allowed the engine, rotor rpm, and the airspeed to decrease.

The pilot further indicated that he attempted to regain airspeed and rpm by lowering the nose of the helicopter. His efforts were not successful, and the helicopter made a hard touchdown in the field. The pilot reported that no mechanical malfunction or failure occurred during the accident flight.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	30, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
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:	April 4, 1996
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	2213 hours (Total, all aircraft), 2025 hours (Total, this make and model), 2190 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 280 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 190 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 5 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Bell	Registration:	N8135J
Model/Series:	47G-5A 47G-5A	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Restricted (Special)	Serial Number:	25060
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	October 1, 1996 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2850 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	22 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	10602 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	VO-435-B1A
Registered Owner:	SOILSERVE, INC.	Rated Power:	260 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	LSHG

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:	4 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	300°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	32°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:		Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	11:39 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/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:	36.199581,-120.940879(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Pollack, Wayne
Additional Participating Persons:	JAMES TORO; SAN JOSE , CA
Original Publish Date:	August 25, 1997
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=29654

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