



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	TRUCKEE, California	Accident Number:	LAX97LA179
Date & Time:	May 14, 1997, 11:59 Local	Registration:	N7082D
Aircraft:	Hiller UH-12E	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 133: Rotorcraft ext. load		

Analysis

The pilot reported that the purpose of the accident flight was to move a 200-foot long line to a new clearing area. After takeoff from the dirt strip, the pilot heard a change in the sound of the engine. He stated that he was turning back to make an emergency landing and attempted to release the long line; however, it became entangled around a tree and the helicopter impacted the ground. FAA inspectors examined the helicopter and the long line, but could not make a determination of when the long line became entangled in the tree; during takeoff or upon returning to land. Examination of the engine revealed continuity throughout, with no preexisting malfunctions noted.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: A loss of engine power for undetermined reasons. A factor in the accident was the unsuccessful attempt to release the long line from the belly hook after it became entangled in a tree.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER
Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - INITIAL CLIMB

Findings

1. (C) REASON FOR OCCURRENCE UNDETERMINED

Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING
Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY LANDING AFTER TAKEOFF

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY LANDING AFTER TAKEOFF

Findings

2. (C) EXTERNAL LOAD CABLE/HOOK - ENTANGLED
3. (F) OBJECT - TREE(S)
4. (F) EMERGENCY PROCEDURE - RESTRICTED - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. (F) DIVERTED ATTENTION - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

On May 14, 1997, about 1159 hours Pacific daylight time, a Hiller UH-12E, N7082D, crashed during an emergency landing 7 miles northeast of Truckee, California. The helicopter was substantially damaged, and the commercial instrument rated pilot was seriously injured. Visual meteorological conditions existed for the 14 CFR Part 133 external load operation, and no flight plan was filed. The flight was originating from a private dirt helipad in Truckee at the time for the purpose of moving a 200-foot long line to a work site.

The pilot stated that after physically "hooking up the long line to the belly hook, I climbed back in and started the aircraft." He stated that the primary mission for this flight was to drop off the long line at a new site and pick up the woodcutters. The pilot reported that the preflight and engine start appeared normal. After lifting to a hover, he repositioned the aircraft over the long line. He said that "As I transitioned to forward flight, I experienced a left yaw and decreasing aircraft noises." The pilot then picked out a place to make an emergency landing and then moved his attention back inside the aircraft, trying to switch his radio from FM to VHF to transmit on the Truckee Unicom. Prior to trying to switch the radio frequency ". . .the RPM rapidly increased causing the aircraft to yaw to the right and increase in forward speed." The pilot reported that corrective action was taken and he then attempted to release the long line; however, it became entangled around a tree and the helicopter impacted the ground.

FAA inspectors from the Reno, Nevada, Flight Standards District Office responded to the accident site and examined both the long line and the helicopter. According to their report, they could not make a determination of when the long line became entangled in the tree; during takeoff or upon returning to land.

The wreckage was removed to the operator's home base in White City, Oregon, where an engine inspection was accomplished. An FAA inspector from the Hillsboro, Oregon, Flight Standards District Office was present at the engine inspection. Engine continuity was established and no preexisting malfunctions were noted. See attached report.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial; Military	Age:	37, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Helicopter	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical—no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	January 23, 1997
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	3878 hours (Total, all aircraft), 855 hours (Total, this make and model), 2934 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 169 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 27 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Hiller	Registration:	N7082D
Model/Series:	UH-12E UH-12E	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	5193
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	Seats:	3
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	April 24, 1997 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3100 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	60 Hrs	Engines:	1 Turbo shaft
Airframe Total Time:	2802 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	Allison
ELT:	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	250-C20B
Registered Owner:	CROMAN CORPORATION	Rated Power:	420 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	JYEL

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	TRK ,5900 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	7 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	12:50 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	20°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 18000 ft AGL	Visibility	30 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	8 knots / 18 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	220°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	24°C / 3°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:		Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	11:55 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	PRIVATE DIRT STRIP	Runway Surface Type:	Dirt
Airport Elevation:	6350 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	Forced landing

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	39.330444,-120.239707(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Cornejo, Tealeye
Additional Participating Persons:	ROBERT C WAGNER; RENO , NV
Original Publish Date:	April 10, 1998
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=29787

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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](#).