



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	KANEOHE, Hawaii	Accident Number:	LAX97LA204
Date & Time:	June 6, 1997, 10:45 Local	Registration:	N64F
Aircraft:	Bell 204-B	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 133: Rotorcraft ext. load		

Analysis

The helicopter pilot was preparing to sling a metal utility pole. As he picked up the load, one of the sling lines snagged. Although ground personnel saw what was happening, the line slipped off before they were able to radio the pilot. The pilot had not verified the security of the load. When this occurred, a shock was transmitted through the airframe to the main rotor system. The pilot felt a resonance and put the load back on the ground. The resonance increased, however, and the pilot jettisoned the sling. The pilot reported that the control response had become mushy, and he believed he was losing control of the helicopter, so he initiated a precautionary landing. The helicopter was over sloping terrain, and as it touched down, the stinger and tail rotor struck the ground.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: failure of the pilot to verify that the load was properly rigged before attempting to pick it up. The uneven (sloping) terrain was a related factor.

Findings

Occurrence #1: MISCELLANEOUS/OTHER
Phase of Operation: HOVER - OUT OF GROUND EFFECT

Findings
1. LIGHT CONDITION - DAYLIGHT

2. (C) SECURITY OF CARGO - NOT VERIFIED - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. EXTERNAL LOAD SLING/HARNESS - SLIPPED
4. ROTOR SYSTEM,MAIN ROTOR - VIBRATION

Occurrence #2: HARD LANDING

Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY LANDING AFTER TAKEOFF

Findings

5. PRECAUTIONARY LANDING - PERFORMED - PILOT IN COMMAND
6. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - ROUGH/UNEVEN

Factual Information

On June 6, 1997, at 1045 hours Hawaiian standard time, a Bell 204-B helicopter, N64F, made a hard landing near Kaneohe, Oahu, Hawaii. The aircraft sustained substantial damage; however, the pilot, the sole occupant, was not injured. The aircraft was being operated as an external load flight by Pacific Helicopter Tours, Inc., under 14 CFR Part 133 when the accident occurred. The flight originated in Honolulu, Hawaii, at 0730 that morning. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and a company VFR flight plan was filed.

According to the pilot, the aircraft was at a 50-foot hover as ground riggers were connecting slings to a 40-foot section of a metal utility pole. As he picked up the load, one of the sling lines snagged on the pole end cap. Although the riggers saw what was happening, the line slipped off the end cap before they were able to radio the pilot to put the load back on the ground. The pilot had not verified the security of the load. When the line slipped, a shock was transmitted through the airframe as a 1-to-1 vertical vibration to the main rotor system. The pilot felt the resonance and put the pole back on the ground; however, as the load settled the resonance increased. The pilot jettisoned the sling but the controls were becoming mushy. At this point he felt he was losing aircraft control and so he initiated a precautionary landing. The aircraft was over a 15-degree upslope when the aircraft touched down and the stinger and tailrotor struck the ground. The tail rotor driveshaft was severed and the tailrotor and tail rotor gearbox both separated from the vertical stabilizer.

According to the manufacturer, an aircraft with the same serial number was registered as N8511F and was operated by Air America until it was reported destroyed in Viet Nam in 1966. This information was not reflected in the FAA aircraft data file.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	33, 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):	Helicopter	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical—no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	January 19, 1997
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	5275 hours (Total, all aircraft), 200 hours (Total, this make and model), 5115 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 80 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 55 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Bell	Registration:	N64F
Model/Series:	204-B 204-B	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	2027
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	Seats:	11
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	May 30, 1997 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	9500 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	4 Hrs	Engines:	1 Turbo shaft
Airframe Total Time:	6227 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	T-5313B
Registered Owner:	THOMAS HAUPTMAN	Rated Power:	1400 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	Flag carrier (121), On-demand air taxi (135)
Operator Does Business As:	PACIFIC HELICOPTER TOURS, INC.	Operator Designator Code:	DBZL

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	HNL ,13 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	11 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	11:00 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	218°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 3000 ft AGL	Visibility	20 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	5 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	10°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	23°C / 14°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	HONOLULU , HI (HNL)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	Company VFR
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	07:30 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:	Precautionary 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:	21.410596,-157.789932(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Crispin, Robert
Additional Participating Persons:	CLARENCE KANAEI; HONOLULU , HI
Original Publish Date:	December 31, 1998
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=29807

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](#).