



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	BUNNELL, Florida	Accident Number:	MIA95LA054
Date & Time:	January 3, 1995, 15:35 Local	Registration:	N6172
Aircraft:	BELL 47G	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Minor, 1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The commercial pilot stated he made a descent over a lake, misjudged his altitude, and inadvertently flew the helicopter into the water.

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 altitude while descending over a lake, resulting in an in-flight collision with water.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - NORMAL

Findings

1. TERRAIN CONDITION - WATER, GLASSY
2. (C) ALTITUDE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

On January 3, 1995, about 1535 eastern standard time, a Bell 47G, N6172, registered to Erick E. Fenz, operating as a 14 CFR Part 91 personal flight, flew into Lake Gore while descending. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and no flight plan was filed. The helicopter was substantially damaged. The commercial pilot sustained minor injuries, and the pilot rated passenger was not injured. The flight originated from Flagler County Airport, Bunnell, Florida, about 5 minutes before the accident.

The pilot stated he made a descent over Lake Gore, misjudged his altitude, and inadvertently flew the helicopter into the water.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	34, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	October 13, 1994
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	520 hours (Total, all aircraft), 385 hours (Total, this make and model), 400 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	BELL	Registration:	N6172
Model/Series:	47G 47G	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	687
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	Seats:	3
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	August 17, 1994 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2350 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	30 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	10190 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	FRANKLIN
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	6A4200
Registered Owner:	FENZ, ERIK E.	Rated Power:	200 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	DAB ,35 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	15 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	15:50 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	150°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 20000 ft AGL	Visibility	7 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 25000 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	6 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	10°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	17°C / 14°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	, FL (X-47)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	Unknown
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	15:30 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:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Minor, 1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	29.46047,-81.249038(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Smith, Carrol
Additional Participating Persons:	GEORGE T ERDEL JR.; JACKSONVILLE , FL
Original Publish Date:	May 9, 1995
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=37719

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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](#).