



Aviation Investigation Final Report

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|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| Location: | HOMOSASSA, Florida | Accident Number: | MIA97LA084 |
| Date & Time: | February 7, 1997, 01:00 Local | Registration: | N9061R |
| Aircraft: | Hughes 269A | Aircraft Damage: | Substantial |
| Defining Event: | | Injuries: | 1 None |
| Flight Conducted Under: | Part 91: General aviation | | |

Analysis

A non-rated pilot attempted to fly the helicopter during a dark night without obtaining the owner's permission. While attempting to fly at night with no ground reference lights, he lost control of the helicopter, which crashed a short distance from the helipad.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the unqualified person's poor judgment, by taking the helicopter without the owner's permission and attempting an unauthorized flight at night; and his failure (or inability) to maintain control the helicopter. Darkness was a related factor.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF

Findings

1. (C) JUDGMENT - POOR - UNQUALIFIED PERSON
2. STOLEN AIRCRAFT/UNAUTHORIZED USE - UNQUALIFIED PERSON
3. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - DARK NIGHT
4. (C) AIRCRAFT CONTROL - NOT MAINTAINED - UNQUALIFIED PERSON

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF

Factual Information

On February 7, 1997, about 0100 eastern standard time, a Hughes 269A, N9061R, registered to Crystal River Helicopters, Inc., crashed during an attempt to steal the helicopter from the operators facility at Homosassa, Florida. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time and no flight plan was filed for the unauthorized flight. The helicopter was substantially damaged and the non-rated pilot was not injured. The flight was originating at the time of the accident.

According to the owner/operator of the helicopter, an unqualified person attempted to steal the helicopter from his helipad located on the company property. The helicopter was first discovered with the tailboom separated and the main structure elevated and in an upright position. There was no postcrash fire. The pilot fled the scene after the accident and was apprehended in the area.

Pilot Information

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|--|---------|
| Certificate: | None | Age: | Male |
| Airplane Rating(s): | None | Seat Occupied: | Unknown |
| Other Aircraft Rating(s): | None | Restraint Used: | |
| Instrument Rating(s): | None | Second Pilot Present: | No |
| Instructor Rating(s): | None | Toxicology Performed: | No |
| Medical Certification: | Unknown Unknown | Last FAA Medical Exam: | |
| Occupational Pilot: | UNK | Last Flight Review or Equivalent: | |
| Flight Time: | | | |

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Aircraft Make: | Hughes | Registration: | N9061R |
| Model/Series: | 269A 269A | Aircraft Category: | Helicopter |
| Year of Manufacture: | | Amateur Built: | |
| Airworthiness Certificate: | Normal | Serial Number: | 47-0696 |
| Landing Gear Type: | Skid | Seats: | 2 |
| Date/Type of Last Inspection: | November 6, 1995 Annual | Certified Max Gross Wt.: | 1140 lbs |
| Time Since Last Inspection: | 37 Hrs | Engines: | 1 Reciprocating |
| Airframe Total Time: | 3654 Hrs | Engine Manufacturer: | Lycoming |
| ELT: | Not installed | Engine Model/Series: | HIO-360-B1A |
| Registered Owner: | CRYSTAL RIVER HELICOPTERS,INC. | Rated Power: | 180 Horsepower |
| Operator: | | Operating Certificate(s) Held: | None |
| Operator Does Business As: | | Operator Designator Code: | |

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

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|---|----------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Conditions at Accident Site: | Unknown | Condition of Light: | Night/dark |
| Observation Facility, Elevation: | OCF ,90 ft msl | Distance from Accident Site: | 26 Nautical Miles |
| Observation Time: | 00:54 Local | Direction from Accident Site: | 45° |
| Lowest Cloud Condition: | Unknown | Visibility | 10 miles |
| Lowest Ceiling: | Broken / 4900 ft AGL | Visibility (RVR): | |
| Wind Speed/Gusts: | 5 knots / None | Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Wind Direction: | 10° | Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Altimeter Setting: | 30 inches Hg | Temperature/Dew Point: | 15°C / 11°C |
| Precipitation and Obscuration: | No Obscuration; No Precipitation | | |
| Departure Point: | (NONE) | Type of Flight Plan Filed: | None |
| Destination: | UNKNOWN | Type of Clearance: | None |
| Departure Time: | 01:00 Local | Type of Airspace: | Class G |

Airport Information

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|----------------------|-----------|---------------------------|--|
| Airport: | | Runway Surface Type: | |
| Airport Elevation: | 50 ft msl | Runway Surface Condition: | |
| Runway Used: | 0 | IFR Approach: | |
| Runway Length/Width: | | VFR Approach/Landing: | |

Wreckage and Impact Information

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|---------------------|--------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| 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: | 28.779861,-82.609825(est) |

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Monville, Timothy

Additional Participating Persons: BENJAMIN H HARRIS; ORLANDO , FL

Original Publish Date: September 30, 1997

Last Revision Date:

Investigation Class: [Class](#)

Note:

Investigation Docket: <https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=38221>

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](#).