



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	WENATCHEE, Washington	Accident Number:	SEA91LA146
Date & Time:	June 24, 1991, 20:00 Local	Registration:	N40450
Aircraft:	ROBINSON R-22 BETA	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation		

Analysis

A SKID TOUCHED THE RIVER SURFACE WHILE THE PILOT WAS MANEUVERING AT LOW ALTITUDE, CAUSING THE PILOT TO LOSE CONTROL AND THE AIRCRAFT TO SINK. THE PILOT WAS MANEUVERING AT LOW ALTITUDE WHEN HE TURNED INTO THE EVENING SUN AND WAS AFFECTED BY SUN GLARE.

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 A PROPER ALTITUDE. CONTRIBUTING TO THE ACCIDENT WAS SUN GLARE.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

Findings

1. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - SUNGLARE
2. (C) PROPER ALTITUDE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	Male
Airplane Rating(s):		Seat Occupied:	Unknown
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):		Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical-w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	January 16, 1991
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	260 hours (Total, all aircraft), 260 hours (Total, this make and model), 130 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	ROBINSON	Registration:	N40450
Model/Series:	R-22 BETA R-22 BETA	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:		Serial Number:	1649
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Unknown	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1300 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	0 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	LYCOMING
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	O-320-B2C
Registered Owner:		Rated Power:	131 Horsepower
Operator:	JOEL J. KOFMEHL	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:		Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:		Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown	Visibility	30 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 11000 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	0°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	-18°C / -18°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:		Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	19:45 Local	Type of Airspace:	

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 Minor	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	47.490005,-120.189132(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Stockhill, Michael
Additional Participating Persons:	RON KARR; RENTON , WA
Original Publish Date:	May 7, 1993
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=41461

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](#).