



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	BOW, New Hampshire	Accident Number:	NYC99LA004
Date & Time:	October 5, 1998, 14:15 Local	Registration:	N8618N
Aircraft:	Enstrom F280	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot of the helicopter was practicing touch and go landings from a private heliport he owned. During the approach, the helicopter's tail boom struck a 330 foot tall guyed meteorological equipment tower, which was located about 1/2 miles from the heliport. The helicopter then descended and impacted the ground, where it was consumed by a post crash fire. Examination of the wreckage did not reveal evidence of any pre-impact abnormalities. The pilot said 'strong wind gusts' pushed the helicopter into the tower, which he did not see because it was on his 'blind side.' The weather reported at an airport about 5 miles northeast of the accident site was: sky clear; visibility 10 statute miles; winds from 350 degrees at 13 knots, with 20 knot gusts.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's inadequate visual lookout and his failure to maintain adequate obstacle clearance, which resulted in an in-flight collision with a tower. A factor in this accident was the gusty wind conditions.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: APPROACH

Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - GUSTS
 2. (C) VISUAL LOOKOUT - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
 3. OBJECT - TOWER
 4. (C) CLEARANCE - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

5. TERRAIN CONDITION - GROUND

Factual Information

On October 5, 1998, about 1415 eastern daylight time, an Enstrom F280, N8618N, was destroyed when it struck a tower while on approach to the Audley Divide Heliport (NH10), Bow, New Hampshire. The certificated private pilot sustained minor injuries. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and no flight plan had been filed for the local personal flight conducted under 14 CFR Part 91.

The pilot was practicing touch and go landings from NH10, a private heliport he owned.

In a written statement the pilot said:

"...I was headed north-northwest in strong wind conditions, which put me in a crabbed attitude. I was preparing to land at my heliport, when strong winds gusts, apparently pushed [the helicopter] southeast into the top a 330 foot tower, which I never did see, on my blind side."

The helicopter then descended and impacted the ground, where it was consumed by a post crash fire.

A witness stated:

"...I looked up and saw [the helicopter] coming my way. I thought at first it was there by the radio tower to work on the tower. It was very windy and all at once the helicopter went to the left. When this happened the tail section hit the tower, breaking off and staying on the tower. The main fuselage spiraled to the ground...."

Examination of the wreckage by an FAA Inspector did not reveal evidence of any pre-impact abnormalities. The helicopter struck a guyed meteorological equipment tower, which was located about 1/2 miles from the heliport and was painted orange and white.

The weather reported at an airport about 5 miles northeast of the accident site at 1351, was: sky clear; visibility 10 statute miles; winds from 350 degrees at 13 knots, with 20 knot gusts.

The pilot reported about 1,200 hours of total flight experience, of which about 520 hours were in helicopters, all in the accident helicopter make and model.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	73, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	None Expired	Last FAA Medical Exam:	November 3, 1989
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	1190 hours (Total, all aircraft), 518 hours (Total, this make and model), 9 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Enstrom	Registration:	N8618N
Model/Series:	F280 F280	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	1507
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	Seats:	3
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	September 1, 1998 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2105 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	2 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	2026 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	H10-360-F1AD
Registered Owner:	BOW AIRCRAFT SERVICES	Rated Power:	225 Lbs thrust
Operator:	ROBERT S. AUDLEY	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:	CON ,346 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	5 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	13:51 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	45°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	13 knots / 20 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	350°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	17°C / 1°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	, NH (NONE)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	14:05 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	AUDLEY DIVIDE HELIPORT NH10	Runway Surface Type:	Grass/turf
Airport Elevation:	680 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	60 ft / 60 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Touch and go;Traffic pattern

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	On-ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Schiada, Luke
Additional Participating Persons:	DON LAVESQUE; PORTLAND , ME
Original Publish Date:	January 28, 2000
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=44114

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