



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	HENDERSON, Nevada	Accident Number:	LAX01LA061
Date & Time:	December 7, 2000, 10:15 Local	Registration:	N355NT
Aircraft:	Aerospatiale AS-350-BA	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	3 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Instructional		

Analysis

The purpose of the flight was an FAA monitored 14 CFR Part 135 check ride of a company pilot by the company check airman. According to the FAA inspector, who was onboard and monitor the check ride, while performing a pinnacle approach procedure into an unimproved site, the right front portion of the helicopter's skid collided with a large rock. This occurred with some forward speed. The resultant hard landing caused substantial buckling of the tailboom assembly, which was discovered after returning to the base of operation.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot misjudged his practice approach into a remote pinnacle landing site, dragging a skid across a rock resulting in a hard landing.

Findings

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

Findings

1. TERRAIN CONDITION - ROUGH/UNEVEN
2. (C) MANEUVER - MISJUDGED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

On December 7, 2000, about 1015 Pacific standard time, an Aerospatiale AS-350-BA helicopter, N355NT, was substantially damaged during a collision with a rock and a hard landing from a pinnacle approach near Henderson, Nevada. Neither the commercial pilot, airline transport rated company check pilot, nor the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) inspector was injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the instructional flight operating under 14 CFR Part 91, and a company flight plan was filed. The flight originated at Las Vegas, Nevada, about 1005. The purpose of the flight was an FAA monitored 14 CFR Part 135 check ride of a company pilot by the company check airman.

According to the FAA inspector who was onboard and monitoring the check ride, while performing a pinnacle approach procedure into an unimproved site, the right front portion of the helicopter's skid collided with a large rock. This occurred with some forward speed. The resultant hard landing caused substantial buckling of the tailboom assembly.

The operator did not file a Pilot/Operator Accident Report, NTSB form 6120.1/2.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial; Private	Age:	53, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):		Second Pilot Present:	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	Helicopter	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical-w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	November 14, 2000
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	5500 hours (Total, all aircraft), 4014 hours (Total, this make and model), 140 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Aerospatiale	Registration:	N355NT
Model/Series:	AS-350-BA AS-350-BA	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	2053
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	Seats:	6
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3800 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Turbo shaft
Airframe Total Time:	6045 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	Turbomeca
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	ARRIEL 1B
Registered Owner:	JAN LEASING LLC	Rated Power:	590 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	On-demand air taxi (135)
Operator Does Business As:	HELI - USA, INC.	Operator Designator Code:	S9HA

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:	Clear	Visibility	20 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	21°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	LAS VEGAS, NV (LAS)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	Company VFR
Destination:	JEAN, NV (OL7)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	10:05 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	3 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	3 None	Latitude, Longitude:	36.039665,-114.929412(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Petterson, George
Additional Participating Persons:	NICHOLAS F HARRINGTON; FAA FLT STANDARDS DIST OFC; LAS VEGAS, NV
Original Publish Date:	December 6, 2002
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	The NTSB traveled to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=50815

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](#).