



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Meadview, Arizona	Accident Number:	LAX01MA272
Date & Time:	August 10, 2001, 14:28 Local	Registration:	N169PA
Aircraft:	Eurocopter AS350-B2	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	6 Fatal, 1 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 135: Air taxi & commuter - Non-scheduled - Sightseeing		

Analysis

The Board's full report is available at <http://www.nts.gov/publictn/2004/AAB0402.pdf>

On August 10, 2001, about 1428 mountain standard time, a Eurocopter AS350-B2 helicopter, N169PA, operating as Papillon 34, collided with terrain during an uncontrolled descent about 4 miles east of Meadview, Arizona. The helicopter was operated by Papillon Airways, Inc., as an air tour flight under Code of Federal Regulations 14 (CFR) Part 135. The helicopter was destroyed by impact forces and a postcrash fire. The pilot and five passengers were killed, and the remaining passenger sustained serious injuries. The flight originated from the company terminal at the McCarran International Airport (LAS), Las Vegas, Nevada, about 1245 as a tour of the west Grand Canyon area with a planned stop at a landing site in Quartermaster Canyon. The helicopter departed the landing site about 1400 and stopped at a company fueling facility at the Grand Canyon West Airport (GCW). The helicopter departed the fueling facility at 1420 and was en route to LAS when the accident occurred. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and a visual flight rules flight plan was filed.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's loss of control of the helicopter for undetermined reasons.

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT

Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

Findings

1. (C) REASON FOR OCCURRENCE UNDETERMINED
2. WEATHER CONDITION - HIGH DENSITY ALTITUDE

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

3. TERRAIN CONDITION - MOUNTAINOUS/HILLY

Factual Information

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Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial; Flight instructor	Age:	27, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Helicopter	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Helicopter	Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	July 3, 2001
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	February 21, 2001
Flight Time:	2794 hours (Total, all aircraft), 699 hours (Total, this make and model), 2600 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 224 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 86 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 10 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Eurocopter	Registration:	N169PA
Model/Series:	AS350-B2	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	2477
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	Seats:	7
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	August 2, 2001 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	4961 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	37 Hrs	Engines:	1 Turbo shaft
Airframe Total Time:	1356 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Turbomeca
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	Arriel 1D1
Registered Owner:	Zuni LLC	Rated Power:	625 Horsepower
Operator:	Papillon Grand Canyon Helicopters	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	On-demand air taxi (135)
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	PG9A

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KLAS, 2181 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	66 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	21:56 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	265°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 11000 ft AGL	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/ 0 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.93 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	36°C / 17°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Grand Canyon W, AZ (1G4)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	VFR
Destination:	Las Vegas, NV (LAS)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	14:25 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class E

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	5 Fatal, 1 Serious	Aircraft Fire:	On-ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	6 Fatal, 1 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	35.988609,-113.983329

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Rich, Jefferey
Additional Participating Persons:	Eric West; Federal Aviation Administration, AAI-100; Washington, DC Ken Arnold; American Eurocopter Corporation; Grand Prairie, TX Archie Whitten; Turbomeca Engine Corporation; Grand Prairie, TX Rick Carrick; Papillon Grand Canyon Helicopters; Las Vegas, NV
Original Publish Date:	June 3, 2004
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	The NTSB traveled to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=53007

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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](#).