



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Medford, Oregon	Accident Number:	SEA04LA114
Date & Time:	June 23, 2004, 09:00 Local	Registration:	N73909
Aircraft:	Bell 47G-3B-1	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 137: Agricultural		

Analysis

The pilot reported that while flying over mountainous terrain with a slight slope on the last pass of aerial application spraying, the helicopter struck a snag (dead tree). The engine lost power and the helicopter collided with the terrain.

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 clearance from a tree while maneuvering. Trees were a factor.

Findings

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

Findings

1. (F) OBJECT - TREE(S)
2. (C) CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

On June 23, 2004, about 0900 Pacific daylight time, a Bell 47G-3B-1, N73909, registered to DSM Inc., operated by Pacific Air Research as a 14 CFR Part 137 aerial application flight, collided with trees and terrain located about 14 nautical miles southwest of Medford, Oregon. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time and no flight plan was filed. The helicopter was substantially damaged by impact damage and post-crash fire. The commercial pilot, the sole occupant, was seriously injured.

Company personnel reported that the pilot had been dispensing a herbicide in the area for about one hour and 20 minutes prior to the accident. Witnesses in the area reported that the helicopter was returning to the staging area for another load of herbicide when they heard the crash.

In a written statement, the pilot reported that while flying over mountainous terrain with a slight slope on the last pass, the helicopter struck a snag (dead tree). The engine lost power and the helicopter collided with the terrain.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	48, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	February 4, 2004
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	March 10, 2004
Flight Time:	9435 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Bell	Registration:	N73909
Model/Series:	47G-3B-1	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Restricted (Special)	Serial Number:	2797
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	Seats:	3
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	February 5, 2004 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2950 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	69 Hrs	Engines:	1 Turbo shaft
Airframe Total Time:	6575 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Allison
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	C-20B
Registered Owner:	DSM Inc.	Rated Power:	420 Horsepower
Operator:	Pacific Air Research	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	MFR,1335 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	10 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	08:53 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	10°
Lowest Cloud Condition:		Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 1900 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.98 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	16°C / 12°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Medford, OR	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:		Type of Airspace:	Class E

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	On-ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	42.224723,-122.966667

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Eckrote, Debra
Additional Participating Persons:	David Jourdan; FAA-FSDO; Hillsboro, OR
Original Publish Date:	October 28, 2004
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=59499

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