



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

---

<b>Location:</b>	Jasper, Alabama	<b>Accident Number:</b>	ATL06CA026
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	December 22, 2005, 13:19 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N350ET
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Eurocopter France AS-350-B2	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	1 Serious, 1 None
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

---

## Analysis

The pilot was in cruise flight at 400 feet AGL looking for a bridge that crossed a river. The pilot stated that he did not maintain a visual look out and was not familiar with the area. Examination of the accident site revealed the helicopter collided with an overhead ground wire near Black Water Creek in-between Alabama Power Structure 51 and 52. The pilot stated that he maintained control of the helicopter, and flew the helicopter to his house and landed. Examination of the helicopter revealed it received structural damage to the nose, windscreen, lower chin bubble, overhead window, left door post and cabin roof. The pilot called an employee on a cell phone. The employee met him at his house after landing the helicopter and transported the pilot to a local area hospital. The pilot's right middle finger was amputated due to injuries sustained during the wire strike. The passenger was not injured. The pilot stated the helicopter did not have any mechanical problems before the in-flight collision with the power lines.

## 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 visual look out, and proper altitude clearance during a low level flight, resulting in an in-flight collision with a power line.

## Findings

---

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT

Phase of Operation: CRUISE

### Findings

1. OBJECT - WIRE, TRANSMISSION
2. (C) ALTITUDE/CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (C) VISUAL LOOKOUT - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

## Factual Information

The pilot was in cruise flight at 400 feet AGL looking for a bridge that crossed a river. The pilot stated he did not maintain a visual look out and was not familiar with the area. Examination of the accident site revealed the helicopter collided with an overhead ground wire near Black Water Creek in-between Alabama Power Structure 51 and 52. Title 14 CFR Part 91.119, Section (b) and (c) states, over sparsely populated areas, no aircraft may be operated closer than 500 feet to any structure. Helicopters may be operated at less than the minimums prescribed if the operation is conducted without hazards to persons or property on the surface. The pilot stated he maintained control of the helicopter, and flew the helicopter to his house and landed. Examination of the helicopter revealed it received structural damage to the nose, windscreen, lower chin bubble, overhead window, left door post and cabin roof. The pilot called an employee on a cell phone. The employee met him at his house after landing the helicopter and transported the pilot to a local area hospital. The pilot's right middle finger was amputated due to injuries sustained during the wire strike. The passenger was not injured. The pilot stated the helicopter did not have any mechanical problems before the in-flight collision with the power lines.

### Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Private	<b>Age:</b>	55, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine land; Single-engine sea; Multi-engine land	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Left
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	Helicopter	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	No
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 3 Without waivers/limitations	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	August 1, 2005
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	No	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	September 1, 2004
<b>Flight Time:</b>	5600 hours (Total, all aircraft), 500 hours (Total, this make and model)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Eurocopter France	<b>Registration:</b>	N350ET
<b>Model/Series:</b>	AS-350-B2	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Helicopter
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	3068
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Skid	<b>Seats:</b>	6
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	January 1, 2005 Annual	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	49600 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>		<b>Engines:</b>	1 Turbo shaft
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	1360 Hrs at time of accident	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Turbomeca
<b>ELT:</b>	Installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	ARREL 1SER
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	Sunshine Air Inc.	<b>Rated Power:</b>	
<b>Operator:</b>	Robert L. Banks	<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual (VMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	BHM,644 ft msl	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	45 Nautical Miles
<b>Observation Time:</b>	13:53 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	140°
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Clear	<b>Visibility</b>	10 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	None	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	/	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Wind Direction:</b>		<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	30.29 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	8°C / 6°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	Double Springs, AL (3M2 )	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	None
<b>Destination:</b>		<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>	14:51 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 Serious	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>	1 None	<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	1 Serious, 1 None	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	33.884998,-87.197219

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Smith, Carrol
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	David W Hargett; Birmingham FSDO-09; Birmingham, AL
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	March 28, 2006
<b>Last Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Investigation Class:</b>	<a href="#">Class</a>
<b>Note:</b>	This accident report documents the factual circumstances of this accident as described to the NTSB.
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	<a href="https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=62982">https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=62982</a>

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](#).