



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Valencia, California	Accident Number:	LAX06LA123
Date & Time:	February 25, 2006, 13:30 Local	Registration:	N61466
Aircraft:	Schweizer 269C-1	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Fatal, 1 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Instructional		

Analysis

The certified flight instructor (CFI) was providing primary flight training to his pre-solo student. After departing from the Van Nuys Airport, the CFI proceeded to the Santa Clara River practice area. The helicopter impacted power lines during an undetermined phase of flight over the dry river bed. The power lines had been suspended from poles located north and south of the river bed. Following impact, the helicopter descended about 40 feet until impacting the ground on its right side. The student, who was located in the right seat, was fatally injured. The subsequent examination of the helicopter's airframe and engine assembly did not reveal evidence of any preimpact mechanical malfunction. Wire mark striations were noted on a main rotor blade. Following the accident the operator (flight school) issued instructions to its employees regarding the location where off airport flight training was authorized. The accident site area was excluded from the authorized training area.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The certified flight instructor's failure to maintain an adequate clearance from objects.

Findings

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

Findings

1. OBJECT - WIRE, TRANSMISSION
2. (C) ALTITUDE/CLEARANCE - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND(CFI)

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

3. TERRAIN CONDITION - GROUND

Factual Information

On February 25, 2006, between 1330 and 1400, a Schweizer 269C-1, N61466, impacted power lines and crashed into a dry wash area of the Santa Clara River about 40 feet below the lines. The accident occurred about 2 miles south-southwest of Valencia, California. The helicopter was operated by Group 3 Aviation, Inc., Van Nuys, California, and it was destroyed. The certified flight instructor (CFI) held a commercial pilot certificate, and he was seriously injured. The student pilot was fatally injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time of the instructional flight, and no flight plan was filed. The maneuver (phase of flight) performed at the time of impact was not determined. The flight was performed under the provisions of 14 CFR Part 91, and it originated from Van Nuys about 1230.

Representatives from the Southern California Edison Company reported to the National Transportation Safety Board investigator that its unmarked power lines were impacted and severed by the accident helicopter. The lines had been supported from poles located to the north and south of the Santa Clara River.

The Federal Aviation Administration coordinator reported that the helicopter crashed onto the near level ground an estimated 200 feet from the lines. The helicopter came to rest on its right side. The student pilot was located in the right seat. The right side Plexiglas canopy (bubble) was shattered. The tail boom was intact. All of the helicopter's principal components were located in the vicinity of the main wreckage. Evidence of wire strike striations was apparent on a main rotor blade. No evidence of any preimpact mechanical malfunction was noted with the airframe. A representative from Lycoming Engine similarly reported that no evidence of any preimpact mechanical malfunction was noted with the engine assembly.

During the accident flight the CFI was providing primary flight instruction to the student, and the student had about 6 hours of total flying experience. The student had not soloed. According to the CFI's employer (operator), the CFI had acquired part time employment as an instructor in December 2005. The accident student was the first student for which the CFI had been assigned to provide flight instruction.

No witnesses reported observing the accident. The accident pilot provided a written statement to the Safety Board investigator in which he stated having no memory of the accident flight.

In March 2006, the CFI's employer issued specific instructions to its employees regarding the location where off airport flight training was to be accomplished. The accident site area was excluded from the authorized training area.

Flight instructor Information

Certificate:	Commercial; Flight instructor	Age:	32,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Helicopter	Second Pilot Present:	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	Helicopter	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	May 1, 2005
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	December 1, 2005
Flight Time:	220 hours (Total, all aircraft), 143 hours (Total, this make and model), 168 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 25 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 8 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Student pilot Information

Certificate:	Student	Age:	24,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 1 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	February 1, 2006
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	4 hours (Total, all aircraft), 4 hours (Total, this make and model), 4 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Schweizer	Registration:	N61466
Model/Series:	269C-1	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	0067
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	October 1, 2005 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1750 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	75 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	4075 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	HO-360-C1A
Registered Owner:	Dragonfly Corp.	Rated Power:	180 Horsepower
Operator:	Group 3 Aviation, Inc.	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	VNY, 802 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	14 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	13:51 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	138°
Lowest Cloud Condition:		Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 28000 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/ None	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.09 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	22°C / 0°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Van Nuys, CA (VNY)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Van Nuys, CA (VNY)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	12:30 Local	Type of Airspace:	

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal, 1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Fatal, 1 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	34.424999,-118.629997

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Pollack, Wayne
Additional Participating Persons:	Joe Large; Federal Aviation Administration; Van Nuys, CA
Original Publish Date:	December 20, 2007
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=63276

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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](#).