Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Haines, Alaska	**Accident Number:**	ANC06LA044
Date & Time:	April 6, 2006, 15:50 Local	**Registration:**	N209CH
Aircraft:	Aerospatiale AS-350BA	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Defining Event:		**Injuries:**	3 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 135: Air taxi & commuter - Non-scheduled		

Analysis

The airline transport certificated pilot was landing a helicopter in an area of grass near the beach of an island on a CFR Part 135 air taxi flight. The pilot indicated that he was focused on a log as a reference point, when just before touchdown, the main rotor blades struck a tree. The operator's director of operations indicated that the rotor blades could not be repaired at his facility, and were being sent to the blade manufacturer's repair facility.

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 adequate clearance from an object while landing a helicopter at a remote site, which resulted in the main rotor blades striking a tree.

Findings

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

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

Factual Information

On April 6, 2006, about 1550 Alaska daylight time, an Aerospatiale AS-350BA helicopter, N209CH, sustained substantial damage when its main rotor blades struck trees during landing on Talsani Island, located in the Lynn Canal, about 13 miles east-southeast of Haines, Alaska. The helicopter was being operated as a visual flight rules (VFR) local area on-demand air taxi flight under Title 14, CFR Part 135, when the accident occurred. The helicopter was operated by Coastal Helicopters Inc., Juneau, Alaska. The airline transport certificated pilot, and the two passengers, were not injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and VFR company flight following procedures were in effect. The flight originated from a nearby landing area about 1545.

During a telephone conversation with the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigator-in-charge (IIC), on April 7, the director of operations for the operator reported that the pilot was landing in an area of grass near the beach. According to the director of operations, the pilot indicated he was focused on a log he was using as a reference point, when just before touchdown, the main rotor blades struck a tree. The director of operations indicated that the rotor blades could not be repaired at his facility, and were being sent to the blade manufacturer's repair facility.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline transport; Commercial; Flight engineer	**Age:**	59,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Single-engine sea; Multi-engine land	**Seat Occupied:**	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	**Restraint Used:**	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane; Helicopter	**Second Pilot Present:**	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	**Toxicology Performed:**	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 With waivers/limitations	**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	December 1, 2005
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	May 1, 2005
Flight Time:	18227 hours (Total, all aircraft), 396 hours (Total, this make and model), 4860 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 45 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 15 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Aerospatiale	**Registration:**	N209CH
Model/Series:	AS-350BA	**Aircraft Category:**	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:		**Amateur Built:**	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	**Serial Number:**	2494
Landing Gear Type:	Emergency float; High skid	**Seats:**	7
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	February 1, 2006 AAIP	**Certified Max Gross Wt.:**	4630 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	21 Hrs	**Engines:**	1 Turbo shaft
Airframe Total Time:	16927 Hrs at time of accident	**Engine Manufacturer:**	Lycoming
ELT:	Installed, not activated	**Engine Model/Series:**	75-101-600A3
Registered Owner:	Coastal Helicopters Inc.	**Rated Power:**	650 Horsepower
Operator:		**Operating Certificate(s) Held:**	On-demand air taxi (135)
Operator Does Business As:		**Operator Designator Code:**	XCHA

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:	Thin Overcast / 1500 ft AGL	**Visibility**	5 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 2000 ft AGL	**Visibility (RVR):**	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	5 knots /	**Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:**	/
Wind Direction:		**Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:**	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.79 inches Hg	**Temperature/Dew Point:**	7°C / 3°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Haines, AK	**Type of Flight Plan Filed:**	Company VFR
Destination:		**Type of Clearance:**	None
Departure Time:	15:45 Local	**Type of Airspace:**	

Airport Information

Airport:		**Runway Surface Type:**	
Airport Elevation:		**Runway Surface Condition:**	
Runway Used:		**IFR Approach:**	None
Runway Length/Width:		**VFR Approach/Landing:**	Full stop

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	2 None	**Aircraft Fire:**	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	**Aircraft Explosion:**	None
Total Injuries:	3 None	**Latitude, Longitude:**	59.074443,-135.273605

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Erickson, Scott
Additional Participating Persons:	Larry West; FAA-AL-JNU FSDO 05; Juneau, AK
Original Publish Date:	October 31, 2006
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=63465