



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Berlin Center, Ohio	Accident Number:	CHI06LA138
Date & Time:	May 28, 2006, 15:15 Local	Registration:	N69HU
Aircraft:	Hughes 269A	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

During cruise flight, a single engine helicopter was substantially damaged when it impacted the terrain after colliding with a static power line wire that was about 52 feet above the ground. The helicopter was observed over-flying a parade route prior to the impact with the power line. Witnesses reported that the helicopter was flying westbound over the middle of highway. It was observed flying straight and level at a low altitude. One witness reported that the helicopter was flying at treetop level for about 1,000 feet 1/2 mile before the accident. The landing skid caught the top neutral wire and the helicopter rotated upside down and impacted the middle of the road. The inspection of the helicopter revealed no pre-impact airframe and engine anomalies.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot flew at a low altitude and failed to maintain clearance from the wire. A factor was the wire.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT

Phase of Operation: CRUISE

Findings

1. (C) ALTITUDE - LOW - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (C) ALTITUDE/CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) OBJECT - WIRE,STATIC

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

4. TERRAIN CONDITION - ROADWAY/HIGHWAY

Factual Information

HISTORY OF FLIGHT

On May 28, 2006, at 1515 eastern daylight time, a Hughes 269A, N69HU, received substantial damage when it impacted a road after hitting a static power line wire that was about 52 feet above the ground during cruise flight near Berlin Center, Ohio. The private pilot received fatal injuries. The 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 personal flight was observed over-flying a parade route prior to the impact with the power line. The departure time and location were unknown; however, the pilot operated the helicopter from a hangar located at his residence. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time of the accident. No flight plan was filed.

Witnesses reported that the helicopter was flying westbound over the middle of State Route (SR) 224. The helicopter was observed flying straight and level at a low altitude, just above treetop level. One witness reported that the helicopter was flying at treetop level for about 1,000 feet to 1/2 mile before the accident. Another witness reported the helicopter's nose was "slightly down and he [the pilot] was waving to the people. He must have noticed the wire because I saw him pull up. That's when I think his left skid caught the wire." The witness reported, "His landing skid caught the top neutral wire that crosses SR224 going north and south." The helicopter rotated upside down and impacted the middle of the road.

PERSONNEL INFORMATION

The pilot held a private pilot's certificate with a helicopter rating. He held a third-class medical certificate. During his last medical examination in February 2006, the pilot reported that his total flight time was 300 hours.

AIRCRAFT INFORMATION

The helicopter was a Hughes 269A, serial number 67-16815. It seated three and had a maximum gross weight of 1,550 pounds. The engine was a 205 horsepower Lycoming HIO-360 series engine. The last annual inspection was conducted on May 12, 2006, and the helicopter had a total time of 12,236 hours.

METEOROLOGICAL INFORMATION

At 1851, the observed weather at Youngstown (YNG), Ohio, located about 25 miles to the northeast, was: winds calm, visibility 10 statute miles, broken 25,000, temperature 28 degrees Celcius (C), dew point 14 degrees C, altimeter 30.17 inches of mercury.

WRECKAGE AND IMPACT INFORMATION

A Federal Aviation Administration inspector examined the helicopter on-site. The inspector reported that there were impact marks on the left and right skids, and on the front cross tube that were consistent with impact with a cable. There were no pre-impact deficiencies noted with respect to the helicopter's airframe and engine.

MEDICAL AND PATHOLOGICAL INFORMATION

An autopsy of the pilot was performed at the Mahoning County Coroner's Office, Youngstown, Ohio, on May 30, 2006.

The FAA Civil Aeromedical Institute prepared a Forensic Toxicology Fatal Accident Report, which indicated negative results for all substances tested.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The FAA was a party to the investigation.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	65, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 3 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	February 1, 2006
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	300 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Hughes	Registration:	N69HU
Model/Series:	269A	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	67-16815
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	Seats:	3
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	May 1, 2006 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1550 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	12236 Hrs as of last inspection	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	H10-360
Registered Owner:	Howard R. Wiggs	Rated Power:	205 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	YNG,1196 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	25 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	18:51 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	45°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 5000 ft AGL	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 25000 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	0 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	0°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.17 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	28°C / 14°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Unknown	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Berlin Center, OH	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:		Type of Airspace:	

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	41.029724,-80.958335

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Silliman, James
Additional Participating Persons:	Tim Lett; FAA-Cleveland FSDO; Cleveland, OH
Original Publish Date:	May 29, 2007
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=63783

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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](#).