



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Hayden, Alabama	Accident Number:	MIA07LA102
Date & Time:	May 27, 2007, 11:08 Local	Registration:	N7763
Aircraft:	Bell 47G	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The student pilot was repositioning the newly purchased helicopter off of a trailer to an area inside his private property. The student pilot's intended landing site was an uneven cow pasture. A witness observed that the approach of the helicopter was a steep descent. The helicopter landed hard, bounced back up, and the tail section started to move close to a tree. At that moment, the helicopter climbed quickly before it rolled over. It looked to the witness as if the helicopter was out of control. The main rotor blades struck the ground several times as it rolled over.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The student pilot's failure to maintain aircraft control during hover, following a bounced landing.

Findings

Occurrence #1: HARD LANDING
Phase of Operation: LANDING

Occurrence #2: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: HOVER

Findings

1. (C) AIRCRAFT CONTROL - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

2. TERRAIN CONDITION - GROUND

Factual Information

On May 27, 2007, about 1108 central daylight time, a Bell 47G, N7763, registered to Whirlybirds Inc. and operated by a student pilot, impacted with terrain during landing in Hayden, Alabama. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time and no flight plan was filed for the 14 code of federal regulations (CFR) Part 91 personal flight. The student was killed and the helicopter incurred substantial damage. The flight originated from within the student pilot's property about 1100.

The responding Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) inspector stated that the student pilot had just purchased the helicopter and transported it to his property on a trailer. The helicopter was flown off the trailer to an area where he usually landed, an uneven cow pasture, within the student pilot's property. A witness observed that the approach of the helicopter was a steep descent. The helicopter landed hard, bounced back up, and the tail section started to move close to a tree. At that moment the helicopter went up fast, about 25 feet above the ground, before it rolled over. It looked to the witness as if the helicopter was out of control. The main rotor blades struck the ground as it was rolling over. He lost site of the helicopter as it continued past an area behind a fence. When he approached the helicopter, the witness immediately observed the helicopter was damaged and the pilot had received serious injuries. The witness added that the accident landing was the student pilot's first landing in the accident helicopter.

An examination of the recovered airframe, flight control system components, engine and its system components by an FAA inspector revealed no evidences of preimpact mechanical malfunction.

The pilot, age 63, held a student pilot certificate with a helicopter endorsement. He was issued an FAA third-class medical certificate in September –2004, and reported "0" flight hours. In August 2006, he was issued an FAA third-class medical certificate and the student pilot reported 160 hours of flight experience at that time. A review of the student pilot's logbooks by the FAA inspector revealed the student pilot did not have the 90-day solo endorsement as required by 14 CFR 61.87(n).

An autopsy of the student pilot was conducted by the Medical Center Blount County, Oneonta, Alabama. The cause of death was reported as multiple injuries due to blunt trauma. Toxicology tests were negative for drugs.

Student pilot Information

Certificate:	Student	Age:	63, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Unknown
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	August 1, 2006
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	July 1, 2006
Flight Time:	160 hours (Total, all aircraft), 160 hours (Total, this make and model)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Bell	Registration:	N7763
Model/Series:	47G	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	K992
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	Seats:	3
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	September 4, 2006 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2350 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	1 Hrs	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	2025 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Avco Lycoming
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	VO-435-A1E
Registered Owner:	Whirlybirds Inc.	Rated Power:	200 Horsepower
Operator:	William Latham	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	GAD,569 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	40 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	11:15 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	76°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 8000 ft AGL	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	4 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	130°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.18 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	28°C / 14°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Hayden, AL (NONE)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Hayden, AL (NONE)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	11:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	

Airport Information

Airport:	Private NONE	Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:		IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	33.925277,-86.870002(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Obregon, Jose
Additional Participating Persons:	Emil Cirone; FAA/FSDO; Birmingham, AL
Original Publish Date:	December 28, 2008
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=65859

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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](#).