



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Mount Clemens, Michigan	Accident Number:	CHI08TA239
Date & Time:	August 2, 2008, 17:35 Local	Registration:	N204TU
Aircraft:	Eurocopter AS-350-B3	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Hard landing	Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Public aircraft		

Analysis

The operator reported that the helicopter had landed on the landing platform when, after shutdown, it was discovered that the helicopter was positioned too far aft on the platform. The pilot then restarted the helicopter and lifted off to reposition the helicopter on the platform. During this second approach to the platform, the pilot removed his hand from the collective control to turn off an audio radio. When the pilot returned his hand to the collective, he inadvertently lowered the collective and the helicopter descended and struck the ground.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's unintentional lowering of the collective control during approach to land, resulting in a hard landing.

Findings

Aircraft	Main rotor control - Unintentional use/operation
Personnel issues	Incorrect action performance - Pilot

Factual Information

History of Flight

Landing	Hard landing (Defining event)
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On August 2, 2008, about 1735 eastern daylight time, a Eurocopter AS-350-B3, N204TU, operated by the United States Customs and Border Protection as a public use flight was substantially damaged during a hard landing to a platform at the Selfridge Air National Guard Base near Mount Clemons, Michigan. The flight was conducted in visual meteorological conditions and was not on a flight plan. No injuries were reported. The flight originated at 1643 from the Saint Clair County International Airport, Port Huron, Michigan.

A report submitted by the operator stated that the helicopter returned from a flight and was landed on a landing platform. After shutdown, it was discovered that the helicopter was positioned too far aft on the platform. The pilot then restarted the helicopter and lifted off to reposition the helicopter on the platform. During this second approach to the platform, the pilot removed his hand from the collective control to turn off an audio radio. When the pilot returned his hand to the collective, he inadvertently lowered the collective and the helicopter descended and struck the ground.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline transport; Commercial; Flight instructor	Age:	35, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; 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):	Airplane multi-engine; Airplane single-engine; Helicopter	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	January 22, 2008
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	May 28, 2008
Flight Time:	2549 hours (Total, all aircraft), 62 hours (Total, this make and model), 1957 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Eurocopter	Registration:	N204TU
Model/Series:	AS-350-B3	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal; Utility	Serial Number:	4413
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	Seats:	6
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	July 10, 2008 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	5224 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Turbo shaft
Airframe Total Time:	95 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Turbomeca
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	Aerial 2B1
Registered Owner:	Dept. of Homeland Security	Rated Power:	747 Horsepower
Operator:	US Customs and Border Protection	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	MTC,580 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:	17:00 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	7 knots / 12 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	330°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	PORT HURON, MI (PHN)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	MOUNT CLEMENS, MI (MTC)	Type of Clearance:	
Departure Time:	16:43 Local	Type of Airspace:	

Airport Information

Airport:	Selfridge Air National Guard B MTC	Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:		IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	42.579761,-82.810249(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Brannen, John
Additional Participating Persons:	Steve Bucher; Detroit FSDO; Detroit, MI
Original Publish Date:	May 6, 2009
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=68618

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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](#).