



Aviation Investigation Final Report

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|--------------------------------|--|-------------------------|-------------|
| Location: | Adelanto, California | Accident Number: | WPR10LA048 |
| Date & Time: | November 7, 2009, 08:30 Local | Registration: | N183YP |
| Aircraft: | PIASECKI/PIKE PV-18 | Aircraft Damage: | Substantial |
| Defining Event: | Controlled flight into terr/obj (CFIT) | Injuries: | 3 Fatal |
| Flight Conducted Under: | Part 91: General aviation - Personal | | |

Analysis

A pilot reported that he was flying his airplane about 0.5 mile behind and slightly above the accident helicopter. He had established radio contact with the two pilots during their takeoff and then made multiple unanswered radio calls to the pilots to warn them about approaching power lines. The main rotor blade struck the power lines and the helicopter subsequently descended into the terrain below and was consumed by a postcrash fire. On scene examination of the wreckage revealed evidence of engine rotation; no anomalies were noted that would have precluded normal operation.

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 clearance from powerlines during en route flight.

Findings

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|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Personnel issues | Monitoring environment - Pilot |
| Environmental issues | Wire - Not specified |

Factual Information

History of Flight

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|----------------|---|
| Enroute | Controlled flight into terr/obj (CFIT) (Defining event) |
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On November 7, 2009, about 0830 Pacific standard time (PST), an experimental Piasecki/Pike PV-18, N183YP, collided with high tension wires and then terrain near Adelanto, California. The owner/pilot was operating the helicopter under the provisions of 14 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 91. The two commercial pilots and one passenger were fatally injured. The helicopter was substantially damaged by impact forces and post crash fire. The local personal flight departed Adelanto Airport (52CL) about 0825, with a planned destination of Riverside, California. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and no flight plan had been filed.

A witness pilot, who was flying about .5 miles behind and slightly above the accident helicopter, stated that he had established radio contact with the two pilots during their takeoff. Just prior to the accident, the witness pilot made multiple unanswered radio calls to the pilots to warn them about the approaching wires. The witness pilot further stated that he felt the helicopter was "laboring" at about 300 feet; however, he did not observe any smoke or other visible malfunction. The main rotor blade struck the power lines and the helicopter subsequently descended into the desert terrain below and was consumed by fire.

On scene examination of the wreckage revealed evidence of engine rotation. No anomalies were noted.

Pilot Information

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|----------------------------------|---|--|---------------|
| Certificate: | Commercial | Age: | 61, Male |
| Airplane Rating(s): | Single-engine land; Multi-engine land | Seat Occupied: | Left |
| Other Aircraft Rating(s): | Helicopter | Restraint Used: | |
| Instrument Rating(s): | Airplane | Second Pilot Present: | Yes |
| Instructor Rating(s): | Airplane multi-engine; Airplane single-engine; Helicopter | Toxicology Performed: | Yes |
| Medical Certification: | Class 2 With waivers/limitations | Last FAA Medical Exam: | March 1, 2009 |
| Occupational Pilot: | Yes | Last Flight Review or Equivalent: | |
| Flight Time: | (Estimated) 12000 hours (Total, all aircraft) | | |

Pilot Information

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|----------------------------------|--|--|-------------------|
| Certificate: | Commercial; Private | Age: | 58, Male |
| Airplane Rating(s): | Single-engine land | Seat Occupied: | Right |
| Other Aircraft Rating(s): | Helicopter | Restraint Used: | |
| Instrument Rating(s): | Airplane | Second Pilot Present: | Yes |
| Instructor Rating(s): | None | Toxicology Performed: | Yes |
| Medical Certification: | Class 3 With waivers/limitations | Last FAA Medical Exam: | February 19, 2009 |
| Occupational Pilot: | UNK | Last Flight Review or Equivalent: | |
| Flight Time: | (Estimated) 1523 hours (Total, all aircraft) | | |

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

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|--------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Aircraft Make: | PIASECKI/PIKE | Registration: | N183YP |
| Model/Series: | PV-18 | Aircraft Category: | Helicopter |
| Year of Manufacture: | | Amateur Built: | |
| Airworthiness Certificate: | Experimental (Special) | Serial Number: | 18-1 |
| Landing Gear Type: | Skid | Seats: | 2 |
| Date/Type of Last Inspection: | Unknown | Certified Max Gross Wt.: | |
| Time Since Last Inspection: | | Engines: | 1 Reciprocating |
| Airframe Total Time: | | Engine Manufacturer: | CONT MOTOR |
| ELT: | Not installed | Engine Model/Series: | R-975 SER |
| Registered Owner: | On file | Rated Power: | 550 Horsepower |
| Operator: | On file | Operating Certificate(s) Held: | None |

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

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|---|----------------------------------|---|------------------|
| Conditions at Accident Site: | Visual (VMC) | Condition of Light: | Day |
| Observation Facility, Elevation: | VCV,2885 ft msl | Distance from Accident Site: | 7 Nautical Miles |
| Observation Time: | 07:46 Local | Direction from Accident Site: | 50° |
| Lowest Cloud Condition: | Clear | Visibility | 10 miles |
| Lowest Ceiling: | None | Visibility (RVR): | |
| Wind Speed/Gusts: | 4 knots / | Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Wind Direction: | 180° | Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Altimeter Setting: | 29.92 inches Hg | Temperature/Dew Point: | 10°C / 2°C |
| Precipitation and Obscuration: | No Obscuration; No Precipitation | | |
| Departure Point: | Adelanto, CA (52CL) | Type of Flight Plan Filed: | None |
| Destination: | Riverside, CA (RIR) | Type of Clearance: | None |
| Departure Time: | 08:25 Local | Type of Airspace: | |

Airport Information

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|-----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|------|
| Airport: | Adelanto Airport 52CL | Runway Surface Type: | |
| Airport Elevation: | 3075 ft msl | Runway Surface Condition: | |
| Runway Used: | | IFR Approach: | None |
| Runway Length/Width: | | VFR Approach/Landing: | None |

Wreckage and Impact Information

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|----------------------------|---------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Crew Injuries: | 1 Fatal | Aircraft Damage: | Substantial |
| Passenger Injuries: | 2 Fatal | Aircraft Fire: | On-ground |
| Ground Injuries: | N/A | Aircraft Explosion: | None |
| Total Injuries: | 3 Fatal | Latitude, Longitude: | 34.521945,-117.462501 |

Administrative Information

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| Investigator In Charge (IIC): | Jones, Patrick |
| Additional Participating Persons: | John Schaper; Federal Aviation Administration; Riverside, CA |
| Original Publish Date: | July 18, 2011 |
| Last Revision Date: | |
| Investigation Class: | Class |
| Note: | |
| Investigation Docket: | https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=75019 |

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

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](#).