



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Los Banos, California	Accident Number:	WPR11CA398
Date & Time:	August 21, 2011, 06:55 Local	Registration:	N948DS
Aircraft:	Bell 47G-4	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Controlled flight into terr/obj (CFIT)	Injuries:	1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 137: Agricultural		

Analysis

The pilot was performing an agricultural application flight in the helicopter over a cantaloupe field. During the final pass along the field border, he observed bee boxes adjacent to power poles, and he shut off the spray applicator. After passing the boxes, he turned the spray applicator back on; his next recollection was of lying upside down in the field. Examination of the helicopter at the accident site revealed that the main rotor blades struck a set of wooden power poles at the 20-foot-level. The helicopter sustained substantial damage to the main rotor blades and fuselage structure. The pilot reported that he had flown an application flight over the same field a week prior, and was aware of the location of the power poles. The pilot reported no preimpact mechanical malfunctions or failures with the airframe or engine 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 the power poles while maneuvering during low-altitude operations.

Findings

Personnel issues	Task monitoring/vigilance - Pilot
Environmental issues	Pole - Response/compensation

Factual Information

History of Flight

Maneuvering-hover	Controlled flight into terr/obj (CFIT) (Defining event)
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Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial; Flight instructor	Age:	40, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Helicopter	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Helicopter	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	January 31, 2011
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	August 10, 2010
Flight Time:	1643 hours (Total, all aircraft), 143 hours (Total, this make and model), 1583 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 243 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 133 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 5 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Bell	Registration:	N948DS
Model/Series:	47G-4	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Restricted (Special)	Serial Number:	3140
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	Seats:	3
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	June 1, 2011 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2950 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	81 Hrs	Engines:	1 Turbo shaft
Airframe Total Time:	8954 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Allison
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	250-C20B
Registered Owner:	SCHUH ROGER J	Rated Power:	420 Horsepower
Operator:	DOUBLE SPRINGS LLC	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	U4LG

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KMCE,155 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	21 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	05:53 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	50°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	9 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	3 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	310°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.89 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	14°C / 12°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Los Banos, CA (KLSN)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Los Banos, CA (KLSN)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	06:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	

Airport Information

Airport:	Los Banos KLSN	Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:	121 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:		IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	37.058055,-120.849723(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Simpson, Elliott
Additional Participating Persons:	Douglas G Kredit; Federal Aviation Administration FSDO; Fresno, CA
Original Publish Date:	October 17, 2011
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	This accident report documents the factual circumstances of this accident as described to the NTSB.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=81568

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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](#).