



Aviation Investigation Final Report

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|--------------------------------|---|-------------------------|-------------|
| Location: | Valdez, Alaska | Accident Number: | ANC12CA033 |
| Date & Time: | April 18, 2012, 11:25 Local | Registration: | N191EH |
| Aircraft: | Aerospatiale AS350 B2 ECUREUIL | Aircraft Damage: | Substantial |
| Defining Event: | Abnormal runway contact | Injuries: | 4 None |
| Flight Conducted Under: | Part 135: Air taxi & commuter - Non-scheduled | | |

Analysis

The pilot was landing a high-skid-equipped helicopter on a snow-covered glacier. After touchdown, both skids sank into the snow, and the tail rotor contacted terrain. The tail rotor drive shaft and tail rotor gear box sustained substantial damage. The pilot stated that there were no preaccident mechanical anomalies with the helicopter.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's selection of an unsuitable landing surface, which resulted in the tail rotor contacting terrain.

Findings

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| Personnel issues | Identification/recognition - Pilot |
| Environmental issues | Snow/slush/ice covered surface - Awareness of condition |

Factual Information

History of Flight

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| Landing-flare/touchdown | Abnormal runway contact (Defining event) |
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Pilot Information

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| Certificate: | Commercial | Age: | 51, 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): | None | Toxicology Performed: | No |
| Medical Certification: | Class 1 With waivers/limitations | Last FAA Medical Exam: | September 13, 2011 |
| Occupational Pilot: | Yes | Last Flight Review or Equivalent: | December 28, 2011 |
| Flight Time: | 2269 hours (Total, all aircraft), 289 hours (Total, this make and model), 1455 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 45 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 18 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft) | | |

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

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|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Aircraft Make: | Aerospatiale | Registration: | N191EH |
| Model/Series: | AS350 B2 ECUREUIL | Aircraft Category: | Helicopter |
| Year of Manufacture: | | Amateur Built: | |
| Airworthiness Certificate: | Normal | Serial Number: | 2505 |
| Landing Gear Type: | High skid | Seats: | 6 |
| Date/Type of Last Inspection: | March 9, 2012 AAIP | Certified Max Gross Wt.: | |
| Time Since Last Inspection: | 83 Hrs | Engines: | 1 Turbo shaft |
| Airframe Total Time: | 9346 Hrs as of last inspection | Engine Manufacturer: | TURBOMECA |
| ELT: | C126 installed, not activated | Engine Model/Series: | ARRIEL 1SER |
| Registered Owner: | ERA HELICOPTERS LLC | Rated Power: | 681 Horsepower |
| Operator: | ERA HELICOPTERS LLC | Operating Certificate(s) Held: | On-demand air taxi (135) |

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

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|---|----------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Conditions at Accident Site: | Visual (VMC) | Condition of Light: | Day |
| Observation Facility, Elevation: | PAVD | Distance from Accident Site: | 17 Nautical Miles |
| Observation Time: | 11:16 Local | Direction from Accident Site: | 159° |
| Lowest Cloud Condition: | Few / 1000 ft AGL | Visibility | 10 miles |
| Lowest Ceiling: | Broken / 3000 ft AGL | Visibility (RVR): | |
| Wind Speed/Gusts: | / | Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Wind Direction: | | Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Altimeter Setting: | 29.79 inches Hg | Temperature/Dew Point: | 5°C / 2°C |
| Precipitation and Obscuration: | No Obscuration; No Precipitation | | |
| Departure Point: | Valdez, AK (PAVD) | Type of Flight Plan Filed: | Company VFR |
| Destination: | Valdez, AK | Type of Clearance: | None |
| Departure Time: | 11:05 Local | Type of Airspace: | |

Wreckage and Impact Information

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|----------------------------|--------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Crew Injuries: | 1 None | Aircraft Damage: | Substantial |
| Passenger Injuries: | 3 None | Aircraft Fire: | None |
| Ground Injuries: | N/A | Aircraft Explosion: | |
| Total Injuries: | 4 None | Latitude, Longitude: | 61.354721,-146.430282(est) |

Administrative Information

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| Investigator In Charge (IIC): | Shaver, Christopher |
| Additional Participating Persons: | FAA Anchorage FSDO; Anchorage, AK |
| Original Publish Date: | June 28, 2012 |
| 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=83463 |

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