



National Transportation Safety Board



Island Express Helicopters
Sikorsky S-76B, N72EX
Calabasas, CA
January 26, 2020

Operations

Island Express Helicopters Inc.

- Certificated for on-demand day and night, VFR-only flights
- 25 employees, 6 helicopters
- 495 charter flights in 2019

Pilot

- Certificated, current, and qualified for VFR
- Highly experienced (8,577 hours flying)
 - 1,250 hours Sikorsky S-76-series helicopters
 - 75 hours instrument flying experience
- Healthy and well-rested

Training

- Indoctrination through Sikorsky S-76 training
 - Aeronautical decision making and judgment
 - Instrument procedures
 - Unusual attitudes
 - Inadvertent entry into instrument meteorological conditions (IMC)
 - Spatial disorientation
- Chief pilot: Supervised and trained other pilots
- Check airman: Evaluated other Sikorsky S-76 pilots

Altitude and Weather Minimums

Island Express' Policy

- Altitude
 - No lower than 300 ft agl, recommended 500 ft to 1,000 ft agl
- Visibility
 - 1 nautical mile

Part 135 Regulation

- Altitude
 - No lower than 300 ft agl
- Visibility
 - 1/2 mile for day
 - 1 mile for night

Preflight Mission Planning

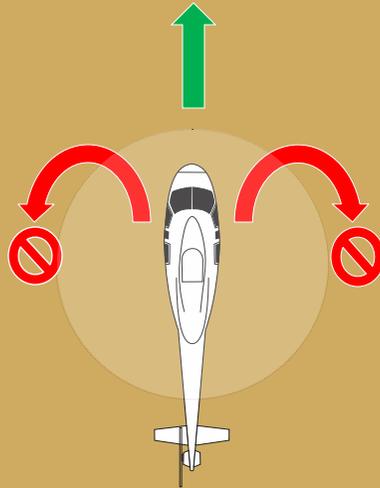
- Flights conducted per federal regulations
- Obtain weather brief via approved sources
- Flight risk assessment completed: Low-risk
- Developed plan to avoid clouds
- Filed company flight plan

Trained Actions for After Entering IMC

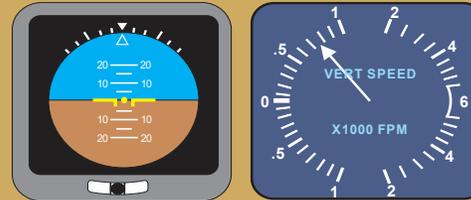
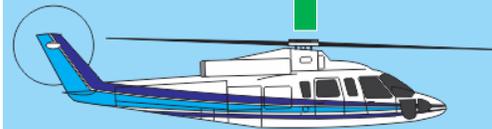
Level the helicopter



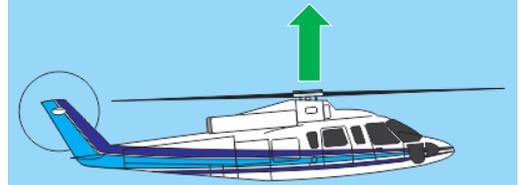
Maintain heading



Climb power
70-75%



Climb airspeed
75-80 knots



Pilot's Actions Before, After Entering Clouds

- Maintained high airspeed while advancing toward cloud layer
- Entered clouds
- Began rapid climb of about 1,500 ft per minute
- Did not declare an emergency



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