



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	CAJON, California	Accident Number:	LAX88FA163
Date & Time:	April 17, 1988, 13:09 Local	Registration:	N5777P
Aircraft:	AEROSPATIALE AS355F	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	2 Fatal, 1 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 135: Air taxi & commuter - Non-scheduled - Air Medical (Unspecified)		

Analysis

DURING INCLEMENT WX ON AN EMS FLIGHT WITH A NURSE AND PATIENT ONBOARD, THE HELICOPTER COLLIDED WITH POWER LINES WHICH WERE SUSPENDED 36 FEET ABOVE A ROAD. CONTROL WAS LOST AND THE HELICOPTER COLLIDED WITH A RETAINING WALL, CLIPPED THE TOPS OFF SEVERAL TREES AND PLUNGED INTO A 70-FOOT DEEP RAVINE. THE MAIN WRECKAGE CAME TO REST ABOUT 220 FEET FROM THE INITIAL POINT OF IMPACT. THE SOLE SURVIVOR WAS THE PATIENT; HE HAD BEEN STRAPPED ONTO A FULL BODY BOARD. DESPITE THE PILOT'S EXTENSIVE MILITARY & CIVILIAN FLIGHT EXPERIENCE & CONCERN FOR FLIGHT SAFETY, THE OVERRIDING LIFE-SAVING MISSION COUPLED WITH JOB PRESSURES CONTRIBUTED TO HIM DELAYING HIS DECISION TO TURN AROUND. ALSO CONTRIBUTING WAS THE DISPATCHER'S/MANAGEMENT'S FAILURE TO READILY PROVIDE THE PILOT WITH ALTERNATE DESTINATION INSTRUCTIONS UPON THE CLOSURE OF THE PRIMARY DESTINATION'S TRAUMA CENTER.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: PILOT'S FAILURE TO MAINTAIN ALTITUDE.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - LOW CEILING
2. WEATHER OBSERVATION - NOT POSSIBLE - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) EMERGENCY PROCEDURE - DELAYED - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. INSTRUCTIONS, WRITTEN/VERBAL - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. (F) COMPANY-INDUCED PRESSURE - COMPANY/OPERATOR MANAGEMENT
6. (F) SELF-INDUCED PRESSURE - PILOT IN COMMAND
7. (F) CONDITION(S)/STEP(S) INSUFFICIENTLY DEFINED - COMPANY/OPERATOR MANAGEMENT

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

Findings

8. OBJECT - WIRE, TRANSMISSION
9. (C) ALTITUDE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #3: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Occurrence #4: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

10. TERRAIN CONDITION - ROADWAY/HIGHWAY

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline transport; Flight instructor	Age:	40, 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):		Toxicology Performed:	Yes
Medical Certification:	Class 1 Valid Medical--w/ waivers/lim	Last FAA Medical Exam:	October 27, 1987
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	8100 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	AEROSPATIALE	Registration:	N5777P
Model/Series:	AS355F AS355F	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	5022
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	Seats:	3
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	April 7, 1988 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	5070 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	9 Hrs	Engines:	2 Turbo shaft
Airframe Total Time:	2764 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	ALLISON
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	250-C20
Registered Owner:		Rated Power:	840 Horsepower
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	On-demand air taxi (135)
Operator Does Business As:	RIVERSIDE AIR SERVICE [EMS]	Operator Designator Code:	RAS

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:		Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:		Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Unknown	Visibility	3 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	5 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	300°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	
Precipitation and Obscuration:	N/A - None - Fog		
Departure Point:	VICTORVILLE , CA	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	Unknown
Destination:	LOMA LINDA , CA	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	12:40 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:	0 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	0 ft / 0 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	2 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Fire:	On-ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Fatal, 1 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	34.250259, -117.540611(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Pollack, Wayne

Additional Participating Persons: R C MORTON; RIVERSIDE , CA
JOSEPH PAGAN; RIVERSIDE , CA
DAVE DUNSTAN; CITRUS HEIGHTS , CA

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Note:

Investigation Docket: <https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=25827>

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The Independent Safety Board Act, as codified at 49 U.S.C. Section 1154(b), precludes the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an incident or accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report. A factual report that may be admissible under 49 U.S.C. § 1154(b) is available [here](#).