



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Waycross, Georgia	Accident Number:	ERA25LA040
Date & Time:	November 5, 2024, 13:00 Local	Registration:	N11AS
Aircraft:	Hughes 369D	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	External load event (Rotorcraft)	Injuries:	1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 133: Rotorcraft ext. load		

Analysis

The pilot was conducting tree trimming operations on a power line right of way that consisted of a 10-blade aerial saw that was slung below the helicopter. During the cutting, a saw blade snagged a 1/2-inch cable that wrapped itself around the lower saw blades. A section of the cable broke off and struck the tail rotor assembly, damaging the stabilizers and tail rotor drive shaft. The helicopter lost all tail rotor authority and began an uncontrolled yaw, impacting the trees as it descended to the terrain where it came to rest on its left side. The impact resulted in substantial damage to the airframe and rotor blades. The operator did not report that there were any preimpact mechanical failures or malfunctions of the helicopter 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:

An encounter with a foreign object, which resulted in a loss of control and collision with terrain.

Findings

Environmental issues	Wire - Effect on equipment
Aircraft	Horizontal stabilizer - Damaged/degraded
Aircraft	Tail rotor drive shaft - Damaged/degraded

Factual Information

History of Flight

Maneuvering-low-alt flying	External load event (Rotorcraft) (Defining event)
Maneuvering-low-alt flying	Loss of control in flight

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	26, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	4-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Helicopter	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 2 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	July 9, 2024
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	May 1, 2024
Flight Time:	1900 hours (Total, all aircraft), 400 hours (Total, this make and model), 1850 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 85 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 6 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Hughes	Registration:	N11AS
Model/Series:	369D	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:	1979	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	790541D
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	November 2, 2024 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3550 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	6 Hrs	Engines:	1 Turbo shaft
Airframe Total Time:	40678 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Rolls Royce
ELT:	C126 installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	250-C20B
Registered Owner:	AVIATION ADVANTAGE LLC	Rated Power:	420 Horsepower
Operator:	AVIATION ADVANTAGE LLC	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	Rotorcraft external load (133)

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	AYS,142 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	0 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	12:55 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	292°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 3900 ft AGL	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:		Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	9 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	None / None
Wind Direction:	110°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	30.08 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	29°C / 20°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Waycross, GA (AYS)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Waycross, GA	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	11:54 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	WAYCROSS-WARE COUNTY AYS	Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:	141 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Holes;Rough;Vegetation
Runway Used:		IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	Forced landing

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	31.248389,-82.395389(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Mccarter, Lawrence
Additional Participating Persons:	Rodney Hood; FAA/FSDO; Atlanta, GA
Original Publish Date:	January 21, 2025
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 4
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=195452

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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](#).