



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Bonnars Ferry, Idaho	Accident Number:	WPR24LA262
Date & Time:	July 24, 2024, 07:30 Local	Registration:	N3375T
Aircraft:	Hiller UH-12E	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Loss of control in flight	Injuries:	3 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot of the helicopter reported that with two passengers aboard, he approached a mountain lake to a hover above the water and saw the engine and rotor speed decrease to the green arc of the engine and rotor tachometer. He maneuvered the helicopter to the shore, and with the engine and rotor continuing to droop, he landed on some “substantially sized granite rocks” where the skids became lodged in the rocks. The helicopter then tipped forward and the main rotor blades impacted the rocks, which resulted in substantial damage to the main rotor and fuselage.

The pilot reported there were no mechanical malfunctions or failures with the helicopter that would have precluded normal operation. The pilot added that he did not verify the performance capability for an in-ground effect or a hover out of ground effect over water. The Helicopter Flying Handbook, FAA-H-8083-21B, states, “When hovering over surfaces as tall grass, trees, bushes, rough terrain, and water, maximum ground effect is reduced.”

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

The pilot’s improper selection of a landing site, which resulted in a main rotor strike. Contributing to the accident was the pilot’s improper performance planning and altitude selection over water, which resulted in an rpm droop.

Findings

Personnel issues	Aircraft control - Pilot
Aircraft	Powerplant parameters - Not attained/maintained
Aircraft	Prop/rotor parameters - Not attained/maintained

Factual Information

History of Flight

Landing	Loss of control in flight (Defining event)
----------------	--

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	66, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Center
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	3-point
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	December 5, 2022
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	August 24, 2023
Flight Time:	349 hours (Total, all aircraft), 272 hours (Total, this make and model), 281 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft)		

Passenger Information

Certificate:		Age:	Male
Airplane Rating(s):		Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):		Restraint Used:	3-point
Instrument Rating(s):		Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):		Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:		Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:			

Passenger Information

Certificate:		Age:	Male
Airplane Rating(s):		Seat Occupied:	Rear
Other Aircraft Rating(s):		Restraint Used:	3-point
Instrument Rating(s):		Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):		Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:		Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:			

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Hiller	Registration:	N3375T
Model/Series:	UH-12E	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:	2001	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	5237
Landing Gear Type:	High skid	Seats:	3
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	October 24, 2023 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2800 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	35 Hrs	Engines:	1
Airframe Total Time:	425.9 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	
ELT:	C126 installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	K65S,2333 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	13 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	07:35 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	122°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	None / None
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	30.06 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	16°C / 5°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Bonnors Ferry, ID (Priv)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Bonnors Ferry, ID (Priv)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	06:50 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	2 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	3 None	Latitude, Longitude:	48.838352,-116.56743

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Salazar, Fabian
Additional Participating Persons:	Chad Anderson; Federal Aviation Administration; Spokane, WA
Original Publish Date:	March 6, 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=194811

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

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](#).