# Aviation Investigation Preliminary Report

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| **Location:** | Miami, TX | **Accident Number:** | CEN25FA183 |
| **Date & Time:** | May 23, 2025, 07:18 Local | **Registration:** | N1195P |
| **Aircraft:** | ROBINSON HELICOPTER COMPANY R44 II | **Injuries:** | 1 Fatal |
| **Flight Conducted Under:** | Part 91: General aviation - Personal | | |

On May 23, 2025, about 0718 central daylight time, a Robinson Helicopter Company R44 II helicopter, N1195P, was destroyed when it was involved in an accident near Miami, Texas. The student pilot was fatally injured. The helicopter was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91 personal flight.

The student pilot reportedly planned to fly his helicopter from his home in Miami, Texas, to a personal appointment in Amarillo, Texas, on the morning of the accident. The pilot departed about 0711 and proceeded southwest. The person who the pilot was meeting in Amarillo stated that the pilot called him at 0712 while en route. The pilot told him that he was concerned about the fog. The conversation lasted about 4 minutes until he told the pilot to hang up so he could focus on flying.

A local R44 pilot stated that he had cancelled his personal flight on the morning of the accident in Canadian, Texas, about 20 nm northeast of the accident site, due to low clouds and fog.

A witness near the accident site stated that he was outside when he heard the helicopter approaching from the east. The weather conditions were foggy with low clouds and mist. He could not determine the exact altitude of the cloud layer because the fog was so low. Due to the fog and low clouds, he could not discern the color of the helicopter, and it just looked like a dark silhouette, but it was flying very low and appeared to be having trouble maintaining control. The helicopter was flying west when it descended below the terrain in a small valley, then climbed up with the nose low and appeared to climb backwards. After the backwards climb, it leveled off very briefly, then made a rapid forward descent toward terrain, in a relatively level attitude. The helicopter was headed back to the east during the rapid descent. He did not notice any parts depart from the helicopter during the accident sequence. The helicopter impacted the ground hard and exploded.

The accident site was located about 4.5 nm southwest of the departure location in a cattle pasture (figure 1). The helicopter impacted the ground facing east, then rotated left about 120° where it came to rest. A postimpact fire consumed a majority of the fuselage and part of the tailcone. The initial impact mark featured a round impression in the dirt surrounded by pieces of the windshield and door frames. On either side of the impression were parallel impact marks and fragments of the skid tubes. One of the main rotor blades impacted the ground near the initial impact mark. Before ground impact, the main rotor blades struck the aft portion of the tailboom, which separated the empennage and tail rotor assembly. All major helicopter components were identified at the accident site. On-scene examination of the airframe and engine did not reveal any evidence of preimpact malfunctions or failures that would have precluded normal operation of the helicopter.

Figure 1. Accident site.

At 0715, the automated weather observation system (AWOS-3) at Perry Lefors Field Airport, (PPA) Pampa, Texas, located about 15 miles southwest, reported wind from 140° at 7 knots, visibility 5 statute miles in mist, overcast clouds at 400 ft above ground level (agl), temperature 16°C (60°F), and dew point 16°C (60° F).

The National Weather Service (NWS) had a Graphic-AIRMET current for the accident time for instrument flight rules (IFR) conditions due to visibility below 3 miles in fog/mist and ceilings below 1,000 ft agl. Meteorological data indicated low IFR and IFR conditions along the route of flight and the fog stability index (FSI) supported a high risk of radiation type fog formation.

There was no evidence that the pilot received a weather briefing before the accident flight.

A Spidertracks GPS unit recovered from the accident site was sent to the National Transportation Safety Board's Vehicle Recorder Laboratory for data extraction.

The pilot's flight logbook has not been recovered, but the pilot had reportedly accumulated about 150 total flight hours in the helicopter.

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

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| **Aircraft Make:** | ROBINSON HELICOPTER COMPANY | **Registration:** | N1195P |
| **Model/Series:** | R44 II | **Aircraft Category:** | Helicopter |
| **Amateur Built:** | | | |
| **Operator:** | On file | **Operating Certificate(s) Held:** | None |
| **Operator Designator Code:** | | | |

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

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| **Conditions at Accident Site:** | IMC | **Condition of Light:** | Day |
| **Observation Facility, Elevation:** | KPPA,3245 ft msl | **Observation Time:** | 07:15 Local |
| **Distance from Accident Site:** | 15 Nautical Miles | **Temperature/Dew Point:** | 16°C /16°C |
| **Lowest Cloud Condition:** | | **Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:** | 7 knots / None, 140° |
| **Lowest Ceiling:** | Overcast / 400 ft AGL | **Visibility:** | 5 miles |
| **Altimeter Setting:** | 30.09 inches Hg | **Type of Flight Plan Filed:** | NONE |
| **Departure Point:** | Miami, TX | **Destination:** | Amarillo, TX |

## Wreckage and Impact Information

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| **Crew Injuries:** | 1 Fatal | **Aircraft Damage:** | Destroyed |
| **Passenger Injuries:** | N/A | **Aircraft Fire:** | On-ground |
| **Ground Injuries:** | N/A | **Aircraft Explosion:** | On-ground |
| **Total Injuries:** | 1 Fatal | **Latitude, Longitude:** | 35.749408,-100.74963 |

## Administrative Information

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| **Investigator In Charge (IIC):** | Lindberg, Joshua |
| **Additional Participating Persons:** | Rolf Sherman; FAA; Lubbock, TX<br>Troy Helgeson; Lycoming Engines; Williamsport, PA<br>Hannah Warren; Robinson Helicopter Company; Torrance, CA |
| **Investigation Class:** | Class 3 |
| **Note:** | |