



AVIATION



HIGHWAY



MARINE



RAILROAD



PIPELINE

Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Cookville, Missouri	Accident Number:	CEN25LA098
Date & Time:	February 16, 2025, 08:35 Local	Registration:	N6100N
Aircraft:	MD HELICOPTERS INC 369FF	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Controlled flight into terr/obj (CFIT)	Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Public aircraft		

Analysis

The pilot reported that he and his passenger were conducting a wildlife damage management flight in a heavily wooded area. He hovered the helicopter about 70 ft above ground level and coordinated with the passenger to locate the target. He then moved the helicopter aft and right for the passenger to have a better view of the target, when the helicopter shuddered and descended as the main and tail rotor blades collided with a tree. The pilot ascended out of the wooded area and located an open field for a precautionary landing, then landed without further incident. The helicopter sustained substantial damage to the main rotor blades and tail rotor blades. After landing, they walked back to the accident area and located one tree that was taller than the surrounding canopy and observed cut tree limbs on the ground beneath the tree. The pilot reported that there were no preimpact mechanical malfunctions or failures 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:

The pilot's failure to maintain adequate clearance from a tree during the low altitude operation.

Findings

Aircraft	Altitude - Not attained/maintained
Personnel issues	Incorrect action performance - Pilot
Environmental issues	Tree(s) - Effect on equipment

Factual Information

History of Flight

Maneuvering	Controlled flight into terr/obj (CFIT) (Defining event)
Maneuvering	Off-field or emergency landing

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial; Flight instructor	Age:	42, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	4-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Helicopter	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Helicopter	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 2 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	October 11, 2024
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	November 6, 2024
Flight Time:	6600 hours (Total, all aircraft), 72 hours (Total, this make and model), 6577 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 88 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 78 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 0 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	MD HELICOPTERS INC	Registration:	N6100N
Model/Series:	369FF	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:	2015	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	None	Serial Number:	0216FF
Landing Gear Type:	High skid	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	January 17, 2025 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3750 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Turbo shaft
Airframe Total Time:	2297.2 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Rolls-Royce
ELT:	C126 installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	250-C30
Registered Owner:	USDA APHIS WS ATOC	Rated Power:	650 Horsepower
Operator:	USDA APHIS WS ATOC	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KTBN, 1159 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	6 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	07:55 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	29°
Lowest Cloud Condition:		Visibility	6 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 1800 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	9 knots / None	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	270°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.08 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	-6°C / -9°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	Light - None - Snow		
Departure Point:	Fort Leonard Wood, MO (TBN)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Fort Leonard Wood, MO (TBN)	Type of Clearance:	VFR flight following
Departure Time:	08:25 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G; Restricted area

Airport Information

Airport:	WAYNESVILLE-ST ROBERT RGNL FORNEY FLD TBN	Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:	1159 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:		IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	Precautionary landing

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	37.660055,-92.213164

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Lindberg, Joshua

Additional Participating Persons: William Grubb; FAA; St. Louis, MO

Original Publish Date: May 9, 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=199712>

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](#).