



AVIATION



HIGHWAY



MARINE



RAILROAD



PIPELINE

# Aviation Investigation Final Report

<b>Location:</b>	Chamblee, Georgia	<b>Accident Number:</b>	ERA25LA156
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	March 21, 2025, 15:53 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N5QV
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Bell 206	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>	Fuel exhaustion	<b>Injuries:</b>	1 Serious, 1 Minor
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Aerial observation		

## Analysis

The pilot of the electronic news gathering helicopter reported that he departed the airport on a preplanned flight to obtain video footage at four locations. After filming the four locations, but before returning to the airport, the pilot was contacted via radio about filming a fifth location due to breaking news. While over the fifth location, the cockpit fuel pump caution light illuminated, and the pilot noticed a low fuel level but elected to return to the airport rather than land at a nearby city helipad. While over the airport ramp area at 100 to 150 ft above ground level, the engine “hiccupped” and then lost all power. The pilot attempted an autorotation, but the helicopter landed hard on the ramp area. The pilot added that there were no preimpact mechanical malfunctions with the helicopter. Examination of the wreckage by a Federal Aviation Administration inspector revealed substantial damage to the fuselage. The inspector also noted that the fuel tanks were absent of fuel and the cockpit fuel gauge needle was below “E.”

## Probable Cause and Findings

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

The pilot’s inadequate fuel planning, which resulted in a total loss of engine power during approach due to fuel exhaustion.

## Findings

Personnel issues	Fuel planning - Pilot
Aircraft	Fuel - Not specified

# Factual Information

## History of Flight

Approach	Fuel exhaustion (Defining event)
Approach	Loss of engine power (total)
Autorotation	Hard landing

## Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	35,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Right
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 2 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	April 30, 2024
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	February 9, 2024
Flight Time:	2783 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1030 hours (Total, this make and model), 2706 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 70 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 19 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 0 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Bell	<b>Registration:</b>	N5QV
<b>Model/Series:</b>	206 B	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Helicopter
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	3098
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	High skid	<b>Seats:</b>	5
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	March 17, 2025 Continuous airworthiness	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	3200 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>		<b>Engines:</b>	1 Turbo shaft
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	15216 Hrs as of last inspection	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Allison
<b>ELT:</b>	Installed	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	250-C20J
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	HELICOPTERS INC	<b>Rated Power:</b>	420 Horsepower
<b>Operator:</b>	HELICOPTERS INC	<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None
<b>Operator Does Business As:</b>	WSB-TV 2	<b>Operator Designator Code:</b>	

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual (VMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	KPDK, 979 ft msl	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	0 Nautical Miles
<b>Observation Time:</b>	15:53 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	0°
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Clear	<b>Visibility</b>	10 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	None	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	7 knots / None	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	None / None
<b>Wind Direction:</b>	290°	<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	N/A / N/A
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	30.08 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	16°C / -7°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	Chamblee, GA	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	None
<b>Destination:</b>	Chamblee, GA	<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>		<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class D

## Airport Information

<b>Airport:</b>	Dekalb-Peachtree Airport PDK	<b>Runway Surface Type:</b>	
<b>Airport Elevation:</b>	998 ft msl	<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	
<b>Runway Used:</b>		<b>IFR Approach:</b>	None
<b>Runway Length/Width:</b>		<b>VFR Approach/Landing:</b>	Forced landing

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 Serious	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>	1 Minor	<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>		<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	1 Serious, 1 Minor	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	33.876002,-84.302031

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Gretz, Robert
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	Joe Howard; FAA/FSDO; Atlanta, GA Jean-Pierre Regnier; TSB Canada; Ottawa, OF
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	July 3, 2025
<b>Last Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Investigation Class:</b>	<a href="#">Class 4</a>
<b>Note:</b>	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	<a href="https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=199910">https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=199910</a>

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](#).