Aviation Investigation Preliminary Report

Location:	Jim Thorpe, PA	**Accident Number:**	ERA25FA344
Date & Time:	September 11, 2025, 14:02 Local	**Registration:**	N5072F
Aircraft:	Hughes 369D	**Injuries:**	2 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 133: Rotorcraft ext. load		

On September 11, 2025, about 1402 eastern daylight time, a Hughes (McDonnell Douglas) 369D helicopter, N5072F, was destroyed when it was involved in an accident near Jim Thorpe, Pennsylvania. The commercial pilot and line technician were fatally injured. The helicopter was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 133 external load flight.

According to the operator, the helicopter departed a landing zone about 1400 with 45 gallons of Jet-A fuel, to perform work near a 120-ft-tall transmission tower about 1 mile away. The purpose of the flight was to measure and mark sections along a fiber optic wire, located above the transmission wires. Anti-galloping devices (dampers) were to be installed at a later time, on the conductor wire below the fiber optic wire markings. To accomplish this task, the line technician would be positioned on a skid plate, on the left outside of the helicopter, behind the pilot seat, with colored tape. The line technician would then adhere a section of colored tape to the fiber optic wire at the position where the anti-galloping device was to be installed.

There were no known witnesses to the accident sequence. Other line technicians, working about 2 miles away, reported feeling and hearing vibrations in the lines about the time of the accident.

The wreckage came to rest in a vertical nose-down position adjacent to the transmission tower with severed fiber optic wire, oriented about a 210° magnetic heading. The fuel tank had been breached during impact. A strong odor of Jet-A fuel was present at the accident site. Additionally, residual fuel was noted in the tank and on the ground near the wreckage.

Four of the five main rotor blades (MRB) separated from the hub and the tailboom also separated. One MRB remained partially attached to the hub and was curled around the wreckage. Two other MRBs were located in the forward vicinity of the main wreckage. One MRB was bent downward about mid-span, and the other MRB was curled downward near the tip. A section of the fourth MRB was located in a tree aft of the main wreckage, and the fifth

MRB was found aft of that, on the ground. The fifth MRB exhibited buckling near the outboard leading edge. A smaller outboard section of MRB was also found about 200 ft forward of the main wreckage.

The upper vertical and horizontal stabilizer were located about 70 ft aft of the main wreckage. Sections of the tailboom, tailrotor driveshaft, tailrotor gearbox, lower vertical stabilizer, and separated tailrotor were located together about 40 ft aft of the main wreckage. The tailrotor hub had separated from the tailrotor gearbox and one tailrotor blade remained attached to the hub. It was bent about 45° near the inboard one-third section. The other tailrotor blade separated about 4 in from the root and the inboard leading edge area of the separated section exhibited an impact scrape indentation.

The pilot held a commercial pilot certificate with a rating for rotorcraft-helicopter. He reported a total flight experience of 11,700 hours on his most recent application for a Federal Aviation Administration second-class medical certificate, dated November 25, 2024. According to the operator, of the pilot's total flight experience, 2,626 hours were in the same make and model as the accident helicopter.

The helicopter was manufactured in 1981 and equipped with an Allison (Rolls-Royce) 250-C20R/2, 450-shaft-hp engine. The helicopter was maintained under a manufacturer's approved inspection program. Its most recent 100-hour inspection was completed on June 21, 2025. At that time, the airframe had accrued 7,985 total hours of operation and the engine had accrued 6,009 total hours of operation. The helicopter had flown 78.2 hours between the inspection and the accident.

The wreckage was retained for further examination.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Hughes	**Registration:**	N5072F
Model/Series:	369D	**Aircraft Category:**	Helicopter
Amateur Built:			
Operator:	WINCO INC	**Operating Certificate(s) Held:**	Rotorcraft external load (133)
Operator Designator Code:			

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	VMC	**Condition of Light:**	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	22N,947 ft msl	**Observation Time:**	13:55 Local
Distance from Accident Site:	5 Nautical Miles	**Temperature/Dew Point:**	26°C /6°C
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	**Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:**	
Lowest Ceiling:	None	**Visibility:**	10 miles
Altimeter Setting:	30.14 inches Hg	**Type of Flight Plan Filed:**	NONE
Departure Point:	Jim Thorpe, PA	**Destination:**	Jim Thorpe, PA

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	2 Fatal	**Aircraft Damage:**	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	**Aircraft Fire:**	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	**Aircraft Explosion:**	None
Total Injuries:	2 Fatal	**Latitude, Longitude:**	40.884331,-75.700413

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Gretz, Robert
Additional Participating Persons:	Joe Sablan; FAA/FSDO; Allentown, PA Lawrence "Mac" Johnson; MD Helicopters; Mesa, AZ Jack Johnson; Rolls-Royce Engines; Indianapolis, IN Trever Walker; Winco Powerline Services; Aurora, OR Greg Stine; Quanta Aviation Services; Red Bluff, CA
Investigation Class:	Class 3
Note:	