



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

|                                |                                |                         |             |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Location:</b>               | Skwentna, Alaska               | <b>Accident Number:</b> | ANC25LA097  |
| <b>Date &amp; Time:</b>        | August 20, 2025, 14:30 Local   | <b>Registration:</b>    | N589SH      |
| <b>Aircraft:</b>               | Airbus Helicopters AS350B3e    | <b>Aircraft Damage:</b> | Substantial |
| <b>Defining Event:</b>         | Miscellaneous/other            | <b>Injuries:</b>        | 1 None      |
| <b>Flight Conducted Under:</b> | Part 133: Rotorcraft ext. load |                         |             |

## Analysis

The operator reported that the helicopter was being used to sling construction equipment to a remote mine site located in an area of steep mountainous terrain. After the pilot placed the external load at a prearranged site next to the drill pad, he maneuvered the helicopter to a landing site in an area of rock-covered terrain to disconnect and stow the lightweight Kevlar long line that was still attached to the helicopter's cargo hook. After a successful landing, the pilot reduced the engine throttle to ground idle, locked the flight controls, then exited the helicopter with the engine and rotor still operating. As the pilot coiled the Kevlar long line into the helicopter, a portion of the line became entangled in the rock covered terrain, and the pilot pulled hard to free it. As the Kevlar long line suddenly released from the rocks, the recoiling line became entangled in the operating main rotor blades which resulted in a severe main rotor imbalance. As a result, the main rotor gearbox and entire main rotor system were subsequently ripped from the helicopter. The helicopter sustained substantial damage to the fuselage, tail boom assembly, and main rotor drive system. The pilot reported that there were no preaccident mechanical failures or malfunctions with the helicopter 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 inadvertent entanglement of a lightweight Kevlar long line into the helicopters operating main rotor system, resulting in a severe imbalance and separation of the main rotor gearbox.

## Findings

|                      |                                      |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Personnel issues     | Incorrect action performance - Pilot |
| Environmental issues | Rough terrain - Effect on operation  |

## Factual Information

### History of Flight

|                                     |                                      |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Standing-engine(s) operating</b> | Miscellaneous/other (Defining event) |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|

### Pilot Information

|                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                          |                |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Certificate:</b>              | Commercial                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Age:</b>                              | 58, Male       |
| <b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>       | None                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>Seat Occupied:</b>                    | None           |
| <b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b> | Helicopter                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Restraint Used:</b>                   | Unknown        |
| <b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>     | None                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>Second Pilot Present:</b>             | No             |
| <b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>     | None                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>Toxicology Performed:</b>             |                |
| <b>Medical Certification:</b>    | Class 2 With waivers/limitations                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>            | March 26, 2025 |
| <b>Occupational Pilot:</b>       | Yes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b> | March 25, 2025 |
| <b>Flight Time:</b>              | 15500 hours (Total, all aircraft), 9900 hours (Total, this make and model), 15400 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 290 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 50 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft) |                                          |                |

### Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

|                                      |                                |                                       |                                                          |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Aircraft Make:</b>                | Airbus Helicopters             | <b>Registration:</b>                  | N589SH                                                   |
| <b>Model/Series:</b>                 | AS350B3e                       | <b>Aircraft Category:</b>             | Helicopter                                               |
| <b>Year of Manufacture:</b>          | 2013                           | <b>Amateur Built:</b>                 |                                                          |
| <b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>    | Normal                         | <b>Serial Number:</b>                 | 7745                                                     |
| <b>Landing Gear Type:</b>            | Skid                           | <b>Seats:</b>                         | 6                                                        |
| <b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b> | August 9, 2025 100 hour        | <b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>       | 4961 lbs                                                 |
| <b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>   | 5 Hrs                          | <b>Engines:</b>                       | 1 Turbo shaft                                            |
| <b>Airframe Total Time:</b>          | 5664.5 Hrs at time of accident | <b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>           | SAFRAN                                                   |
| <b>ELT:</b>                          | C126 installed, not activated  | <b>Engine Model/Series:</b>           | ARRIEL 2D                                                |
| <b>Registered Owner:</b>             | CSC DELAWARE TRUST CO TRUSTEE  | <b>Rated Power:</b>                   |                                                          |
| <b>Operator:</b>                     | Soloy Helicopters LLC          | <b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b> | Rotorcraft external load (133), On-demand air taxi (135) |

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

|                                         |                                  |                                             |                   |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>     | Visual (VMC)                     | <b>Condition of Light:</b>                  | Day               |
| <b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b> | APT,1858 ft msl                  | <b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>         | 21 Nautical Miles |
| <b>Observation Time:</b>                | 10:57 Local                      | <b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>        | 20°               |
| <b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>          | Few / 2700 ft AGL                | <b>Visibility</b>                           | 25 miles          |
| <b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>                  |                                  | <b>Visibility (RVR):</b>                    |                   |
| <b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>                | /                                | <b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>     | None / None       |
| <b>Wind Direction:</b>                  |                                  | <b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b> | N/A / N/A         |
| <b>Altimeter Setting:</b>               | 30.12 inches Hg                  | <b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>               | 13°C / 11°C       |
| <b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>   | No Obscuration; No Precipitation |                                             |                   |
| <b>Departure Point:</b>                 | Skwentna , AK                    | <b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>           | Company VFR       |
| <b>Destination:</b>                     | Skwentna , AK                    | <b>Type of Clearance:</b>                   | None              |
| <b>Departure Time:</b>                  |                                  | <b>Type of Airspace:</b>                    | Class G           |

## Wreckage and Impact Information

|                            |        |                             |                           |
|----------------------------|--------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Crew Injuries:</b>      | 1 None | <b>Aircraft Damage:</b>     | Substantial               |
| <b>Passenger Injuries:</b> |        | <b>Aircraft Fire:</b>       | None                      |
| <b>Ground Injuries:</b>    |        | <b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>  | None                      |
| <b>Total Injuries:</b>     | 1 None | <b>Latitude, Longitude:</b> | 61.769167,-152.98693(est) |

## Administrative Information

|                                          |                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>     | Johnson, Clinton                                                                                        |
| <b>Additional Participating Persons:</b> | Paula Huckleberry; Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) ; Wasilla , AK                                 |
| <b>Original Publish Date:</b>            | October 23, 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=200883">https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=200883</a> |

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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](#).