



AVIATION



HIGHWAY



MARINE



RAILROAD



PIPELINE

# Aviation Investigation Final Report

<b>Location:</b>	San Luis, Arizona	<b>Accident Number:</b>	WPR25LA189
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	June 25, 2025, 09:50 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N3951A
<b>Aircraft:</b>	AMERICAN EUROCOPTER CORP AS350B3	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>	Hard landing	<b>Injuries:</b>	2 None
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Public aircraft		

## Analysis

According to the operator, the instructor and pilot receiving instruction were conducting hover autorotation training over cement that was visually obstructed by a hard packed dirt surface. On the third autorotation, the pilot under instruction established a hover at a slightly higher altitude than the previous two practice iterations. During recovery, the pilot receiving instruction executed the appropriate procedures, but the helicopter began to settle faster than expected and he was unable to sufficiently reduce the rate of descent. Subsequently, the helicopter landed hard and resulted in substantial damage to the tail boom.

The operator reported no preaccident mechanical malfunctions or failures with the airplane 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 receiving instruction's failure to properly recover the helicopter during an autorotative landing and the instructor pilot's failure to intervene, which resulted in a hard landing.

## Findings

<b>Personnel issues</b>	Identification/recognition - Instructor/check pilot
<b>Personnel issues</b>	Use of equip/system - Student/instructed pilot
<b>Environmental issues</b>	(general) - Effect on equipment
<b>Aircraft</b>	Descent rate - Not attained/maintained
<b>Personnel issues</b>	Aircraft control - Instructor/check pilot
<b>Personnel issues</b>	Aircraft control - Student/instructed pilot

# Factual Information

## History of Flight

<b>Autorotation</b>	Hard landing (Defining event)
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## Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Flight instructor	<b>Age:</b>	26,Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Left
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	Helicopter	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	4-point
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	Airplane; Helicopter	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	Yes
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	Helicopter; Instrument helicopter	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 1 With waivers/limitations	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	June 17, 2024
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	Yes	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	June 6, 2025
<b>Flight Time:</b>	(Estimated) 2895 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1420 hours (Total, this make and model), 2768 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 168 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 62 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

## Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Commercial; Military	<b>Age:</b>	36,Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine land	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Right
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	Helicopter	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	4-point
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	Airplane; Helicopter	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	Yes
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 2 Without waivers/limitations	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	March 12, 2025
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	Yes	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	January 15, 2025
<b>Flight Time:</b>	(Estimated) 1206 hours (Total, all aircraft), 192 hours (Total, this make and model), 251 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 129 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 35 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	AMERICAN EUROCOPTER CORP	<b>Registration:</b>	N3951A
<b>Model/Series:</b>	AS350B3	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Helicopter
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>	2010	<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Utility	<b>Serial Number:</b>	4993
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	High skid	<b>Seats:</b>	6
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	June 6, 2025 100 hour	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	5225 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>		<b>Engines:</b>	1 Turbo shaft
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	5969.2 Hrs	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Safran
<b>ELT:</b>	C126 installed, not activated	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	Arriel 2B1
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	US DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY	<b>Rated Power:</b>	847 Horsepower
<b>Operator:</b>	US DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY	<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual (VMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	KNYL, 213 ft msl	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	9 Nautical Miles
<b>Observation Time:</b>	09:57 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	21°
<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>	/ None	<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>	29.89 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	32°C / 4°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	Yuma, AZ (NYL)	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	Company VFR
<b>Destination:</b>	Yuma, AZ (NYL)	<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>	07:47 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class E

## Airport Information

<b>Airport:</b>	Rollie Airfield 44A	<b>Runway Surface Type:</b>	Asphalt;Concrete;Gravel
<b>Airport Elevation:</b>	163 ft msl	<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	Dry
<b>Runway Used:</b>	17/35	<b>IFR Approach:</b>	None
<b>Runway Length/Width:</b>	2800 ft / 60 ft	<b>VFR Approach/Landing:</b>	Simulated forced landing;None

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	2 None	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>		<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	2 None	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	32.516306,-114.69838(est)

## Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Nixon, Albert
Additional Participating Persons:	TBD; FAA; Scottsdale, AZ
Original Publish Date:	October 9, 2025
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	<a href="#">Class 4</a>
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	<a href="https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=200396">https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=200396</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](#).