



Aviation Investigation Preliminary Report

Location:	Lincoln, MT	Accident Number:	WPR25LA260
Date & Time:	August 26, 2025, 01:00 Local	Registration:	N38AJ
Aircraft:	BELL TEXTRON CANADA LTD 407	Injuries:	3 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 135: Air taxi & commuter - Non-scheduled - Air Medical (Medical emergency)		

On August 26, 2025, at about 0100 mountain daylight time, a Bell 407 GTX, N38AJ, was substantially damaged when it was involved in an accident near Lincoln, Montana. The pilot and two passengers were not injured. The helicopter was operated as a Title 14, *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 135 air medical flight.

The pilot reported departing Missoula Montana Airport (MSO) Missoula, Montana and arrived near the town of Lincoln, Montana about 0048. The pilot orbited the scene for about 15 minutes waiting for a ground ambulance to arrive. During that time the pilot conducted multiple landing area reconnaissance passes of the landing zone and selected a parking lot that was about 100 ft by 100 ft. The pilot identified multiple hazards around the perimeter of the landing zone that included trees, wires, gravel, and tall signs in the parking area. As the ground ambulance arrived, the pilot conducted a low pass along the approach path to further assess the landing zone. The pilot and crew decided to land, and the pilot conducted a brief that included approach and abort possibilities. The pilot then spoke to the ground contact and received a landing zone brief and was told that the landing zone was clear with no overhead obstructions and that the police would block the road.

The pilot chose to perform a steep approach to help avoid obstacles and set the approach path for the middle of the landing zone. When the helicopter was about 50 ft above ground level (agl), dust began to rise from behind the helicopter. The crew discussed the dust, confirmed their ability to see through the dust with their respective night vision goggles, and elected to continue the approach. While about 10 ft agl, the rear of the helicopter impacted the sign, which resulted in the helicopter impacting the parking lot.

The helicopter came to rest in the parking lot on its left side against one of two steel posts that previously supported the sign. The fuselage, main rotor and tail rotor assemblies sustained substantial damage. All major components of the helicopter were accounted for.

The pilot reported no preaccident mechanical anomalies or malfunctions that could have precluded normal operation.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	BELL TEXTRON CANADA LTD	Registration:	N38AJ
Model/Series:	407	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Amateur Built:			
Operator:	Life Flight Network	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	Commuter air carrier (135)
Operator Designator Code:			

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	VMC	Condition of Light:	NightDark
Observation Facility, Elevation:	0 ft msl	Observation Time:	01:00 Local
Distance from Accident Site:	0 Nautical Miles	Temperature/Dew Point:	21°C /5°C
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	/ None
Lowest Ceiling:		Visibility:	10 miles
Altimeter Setting:	30.06 inches Hg	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	CVFR
Departure Point:	Missoula, MT (MSO)	Destination:	Lincoln, MT

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	2 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	3 None	Latitude, Longitude:	46.955134,-112.6809 (est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Salazar, Fabian
Additional Participating Persons:	Steven M. Hahoney; Federal Aviation Administration; Helena, MT
Investigation Class:	Class 3
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.