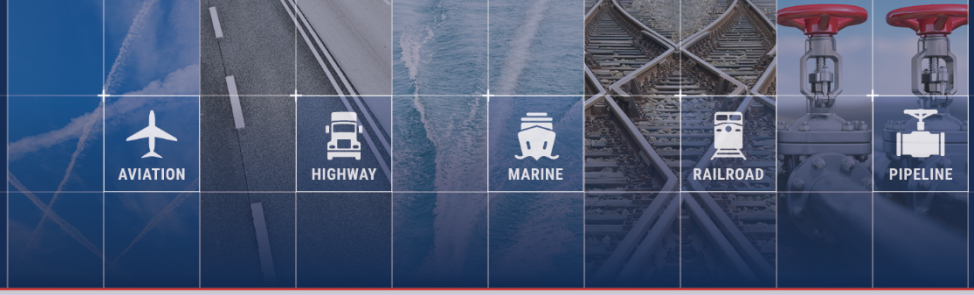

Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	DeLand, Florida	**Accident Number:**	ERA25LA380
Date & Time:	February 26, 2025, 13:00 Local	**Registration:**	N849DB
Aircraft:	BELL HELICOPTER CORP UH-1D	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Defining Event:	Loss of control in flight	**Injuries:**	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

Two pilots were attempting to reposition the vintage, experimental-exhibition category helicopter into a hangar to protect it from hail damage before a severe cold front arrived. The pilots initially attempted to land the helicopter on a movable skid, but because the skid was too close to a building (given the wind conditions), the pilots landed the helicopter before one of the pilots disembarked and moved the skid. The accident pilot then took off in the helicopter and flew in a roughly circular pattern to approach the skid for landing. During the flight the helicopter “developed a severe shake,” so the pilot decided to immediately land the helicopter on the grass below. During the landing, the helicopter’s tail rotor struck the ground, substantially damaging it and its mount/drive system. The pilot reported that there were no preimpact mechanical malfunctions or failures of the helicopter that would have precluded normal operation. He further described that at the time of the accident the wind velocity was about 30 knots, and “I wish it had not been so windy, with the wind whipping around the building. If the skid had been in an area of clear air, it would have been fine.”

Probable Cause and Findings

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

The pilot’s loss of helicopter control during landing approach in strong wind conditions, which resulted in tail rotor contact with the ground during landing.

Findings

Personnel issues	Aircraft control - Pilot
Aircraft	Landing flare - Not attained/maintained

Factual Information

History of Flight

Landing	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)
Approach	Loss of control in flight (Defining event)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	**Age:**	63,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	**Seat Occupied:**	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	**Restraint Used:**	3-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	**Second Pilot Present:**	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	**Toxicology Performed:**	
Medical Certification:	Class 2 With waivers/limitations	**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	May 27, 2025
Occupational Pilot:	No	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	October 23, 2024
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 15000 hours (Total, all aircraft), 9 hours (Total, this make and model)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	BELL HELICOPTER CORP	**Registration:**	N849DB
Model/Series:	UH-1D	**Aircraft Category:**	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:	1970	**Amateur Built:**	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Experimental (Special)	**Serial Number:**	8494
Landing Gear Type:	None; Skid	**Seats:**	13
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	January 12, 2020 Condition	**Certified Max Gross Wt.:**	9000 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	13 Hrs	**Engines:**	1
Airframe Total Time:	10013 Hrs at time of accident	**Engine Manufacturer:**	
ELT:	Not installed	**Engine Model/Series:**	
Registered Owner:	On file	**Rated Power:**	
Operator:	On file	**Operating Certificate(s) Held:**	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	**Condition of Light:**	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	DED,79 ft msl	**Distance from Accident Site:**	1 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	13:15 Local	**Direction from Accident Site:**	32°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	**Visibility**	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	**Visibility (RVR):**	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	6 knots / None	**Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:**	None / None
Wind Direction:	220°	**Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:**	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	30.04 inches Hg	**Temperature/Dew Point:**	25°C / 9°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	DeLand, FL	**Type of Flight Plan Filed:**	None
Destination:	DeLand, FL	**Type of Clearance:**	None
Departure Time:		**Type of Airspace:**	Class D

Airport Information

Airport:	DELAND MUNI-SIDNEY H TAYLOR FLD DED	**Runway Surface Type:**	
Airport Elevation:	79 ft msl	**Runway Surface Condition:**	Dry
Runway Used:		**IFR Approach:**	None
Runway Length/Width:		**VFR Approach/Landing:**	Full stop

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	**Aircraft Fire:**	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	**Aircraft Explosion:**	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	**Latitude, Longitude:**	29.058652,-81.288969(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Alleyne, Eric
Additional Participating Persons:	Brad Holland; FAA/FSDO; Orlando, FL
Original Publish Date:	January 9, 2026
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 4
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=201916