



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

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<b>Location:</b>	Jacksonville, Florida	<b>Accident Number:</b>	ERA26LA170
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	April 10, 2026, 20:22 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N314JP
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Bell 407	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>	Hard landing	<b>Injuries:</b>	2 None
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Public aircraft		

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## Analysis

The pilot and flight instructor were conducting a helicopter training flight using night vision goggles. The training included multiple hovering and straight-in touchdown autorotation maneuvers. The flight instructor stated that during the last touchdown autorotation landing the approach was normal. He continued that the pilot conducted a good deceleration flare but applied the initial collective too early resulting in rotor rpm decay. The helicopter landed hard on the heel of the skids while applying aft cyclic. The main rotor blades contacted both vertical stabilizers and the tailboom resulting in substantial damage. The operator reported that there were no preaccident mechanical malfunctions or failures 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 improper recovery from a practice autorotation, which resulted in a hard landing. Contributing to the accident was the flight instructor's inadequate supervision of the pilot receiving the instruction.

## Findings

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<b>Personnel issues</b>	Aircraft control - Pilot
<b>Aircraft</b>	Pitch control - Not attained/maintained
<b>Personnel issues</b>	Monitoring other person - Instructor/check pilot

## Factual Information

### History of Flight

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

<b>Certificate:</b>	Commercial	<b>Age:</b>	40, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Right
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	Helicopter	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	4-point
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	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>	April 8, 2026
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	Yes	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	March 12, 2026
<b>Flight Time:</b>	644 hours (Total, all aircraft), 205 hours (Total, this make and model), 455 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 42 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 11 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

### Flight instructor Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Commercial; Flight instructor	<b>Age:</b>	51, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>		<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Left
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	Helicopter	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	4-point
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	Helicopter	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	Yes
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	Helicopter	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 2 With waivers/limitations	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	February 10, 2026
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	Yes	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	May 15, 2025
<b>Flight Time:</b>	5500 hours (Total, all aircraft), 350 hours (Total, this make and model), 5300 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 60 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 15 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 3 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Bell	<b>Registration:</b>	N314JP
<b>Model/Series:</b>	407	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Helicopter
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>	2004	<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	53587
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	High skid	<b>Seats:</b>	7
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	March 6, 2026 Continuous airworthiness	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	5250 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>	12 Hrs	<b>Engines:</b>	1 Turbo shaft
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	6901 Hrs at time of accident	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	ROLLS-ROYC
<b>ELT:</b>	C91A installed, not activated	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	250-C47B
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	CITY OF JACKSONVILLE	<b>Rated Power:</b>	650 Horsepower
<b>Operator:</b>	CITY OF JACKSONVILLE	<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None
<b>Operator Does Business As:</b>	Jacksonville Sheriff's Office	<b>Operator Designator Code:</b>	

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual (VMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Night
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	CRG,22 ft msl	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	10 Nautical Miles
<b>Observation Time:</b>	20:00 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	232°
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>		<b>Visibility</b>	10 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	Overcast / 6000 ft AGL	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	7 knots / None	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	None / None
<b>Wind Direction:</b>	50°	<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	N/A / N/A
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	30.26 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	19°C / 16°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	Jacksonville, FL	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	None
<b>Destination:</b>	Jacksonville, FL	<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>		<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class D

## Airport Information

<b>Airport:</b>	JACKSONVILLE EXEC AT CRAIG CRG	<b>Runway Surface Type:</b>	Asphalt
<b>Airport Elevation:</b>	40 ft msl	<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	Dry
<b>Runway Used:</b>	05	<b>IFR Approach:</b>	None
<b>Runway Length/Width:</b>	4004 ft / 100 ft	<b>VFR Approach/Landing:</b>	Simulated forced landing

## 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>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	2 None	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	30.337904,-81.514333(est)

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Lewis, David
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	Herschel Ray Freeman; FAA/FSDO; Orlando, FL
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	May 29, 2026
<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.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=202820">https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=202820</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](#).