



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Chimney Rock, Montana	Accident Number:	WPR26LA146
Date & Time:	April 4, 2026, 16:00 Local	Registration:	N5017G
Aircraft:	BELL HELICOPTER TEXTRON 206L-1	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Dynamic rollover	Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The pilot and pilot-rated passenger were on a personal flight practicing off-airport landings. After landing in an open meadow, the pilot elected to depart using a low-altitude circling maneuver. The pilot stated the purpose of the maneuver was to gain effective translational lift. During the maneuver, as the helicopter accelerated, it began to descend, and the left skid contacted the terrain, resulting in a dynamic rollover. The helicopter sustained substantial damage to the fuselage, , main rotor system, tail rotor system, and empennage.

The pilot stated that they received training in circling takeoff maneuvers during their commercial pilot training and had previously performed similar maneuvers.

The pilot reported there were no pre-accident mechanical malfunctions or anomalies 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 failure to maintain adequate clearance from the terrain while performing a low-altitude circling takeoff maneuver, which resulted in a dynamic rollover.

Findings

Personnel issues	Aircraft control - Pilot
Environmental issues	Sloped/uneven terrain - Contributed to outcome
Personnel issues	Monitoring environment - Pilot

Factual Information

History of Flight

Maneuvering-low-alt flying	Low altitude operation/event
Takeoff	Dynamic rollover (Defining event)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	21, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	4-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Helicopter	Second Pilot Present:	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 1 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	July 1, 2025
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	November 2, 2026
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 264 hours (Total, all aircraft), 50 hours (Total, this make and model), 231 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 3 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Pilot-rated passenger Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	58, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	4-point
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:			

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	BELL HELICOPTER TEXTRON	Registration:	N5017G
Model/Series:	206L-1	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:	1979	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	45228
Landing Gear Type:	Tandem; Skid	Seats:	7
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	February 10, 2026 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	4050 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	10 Hrs	Engines:	1 Turbo shaft
Airframe Total Time:	19586.4 Hrs as of last inspection	Engine Manufacturer:	Rolls Royce
ELT:	C126 installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	250-C28B
Registered Owner:	HELMONTANA.COM LLC	Rated Power:	435 Horsepower
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:	LVM,4618 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	16 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	16:00 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	54°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 6500 ft AGL	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:		Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	17 knots / 26 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	None / None
Wind Direction:	270°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	30.28 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	13°C / -3°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Livingston, MT (MT48)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Livingston, MT (MT48)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	14:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	Mountain grassy meadow	Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	Soft
Runway Used:		IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	Touch and go

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	2 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	45.543896,-110.74795

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Beckett, Joel
Additional Participating Persons:	Casey Stevens; FAA Helena FSDO; Helena, MT
Original Publish Date:	June 22, 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=202757

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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](#).