



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

<b>Location:</b>	Young, Arizona	<b>Accident Number:</b>	WPR26LA172
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	April 29, 2026, 08:00 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N407BB
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Bell 407	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>	Tailstrike	<b>Injuries:</b>	1 None
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

## Analysis

The pilot reported that during a personal flight in the helicopter, he made an approach to land in mountainous terrain. While landing, the tail rotor and vertical stabilizer struck tree stump and the helicopter touched down on the uneven surface and came to rest upright. The helicopter sustained substantial damage to the tail rotor and vertical stabilizer.

The pilot reported that there were no preimpact 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 failure to maintain clearance from a tree stump during landing in mountainous terrain.

## Findings

---

<b>Personnel issues</b>	Identification/recognition - Pilot
<b>Personnel issues</b>	Use of equip/system - Pilot
<b>Environmental issues</b>	Tree(s) - Effect on equipment

## Factual Information

### History of Flight

<b>Landing-flare/touchdown</b>	Tailstrike (Defining event)
--------------------------------	-----------------------------

### Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Private	<b>Age:</b>	65, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Right
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	Helicopter	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	Unknown
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 3 With waivers/limitations	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	September 15, 2025
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	Yes	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	January 29, 2026
<b>Flight Time:</b>	(Estimated) 6000 hours (Total, all aircraft), 5300 hours (Total, this make and model), 5950 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 50 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 20 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

### Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Bell	<b>Registration:</b>	N407BB
<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>	53603
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	None; Skid	<b>Seats:</b>	7
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>		<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	5250 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>		<b>Engines:</b>	1 Turbo shaft
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	5350 Hrs	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	ROLLS-ROYCE
<b>ELT:</b>	C91 installed, activated, aided in locating accident	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	250-C47B
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	BRAVO BRAVO LLC	<b>Rated Power:</b>	675 Horsepower
<b>Operator:</b>	BRAVO BRAVO LLC	<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>	KPAN,5158 ft msl	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	13 Nautical Miles
<b>Observation Time:</b>	07:55 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	297°
<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>	/
<b>Wind Direction:</b>		<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	30.14 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	15°C / -7°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	Chandler, AZ (P19)	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	None
<b>Destination:</b>	Chandler, AZ (P19)	<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	VFR
<b>Departure Time:</b>	06:00 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class G

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 None	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>		<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>		<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	1 None	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	34.159167,-111.10334(est)

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Hicks, Michael
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	John Kautz; FAA; Scottsdale, AZ
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	July 1, 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=202911">https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=202911</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](#).