



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Chapmansboro, Tennessee	Accident Number:	ERA26LA194
Date & Time:	April 30, 2026, 02:06 Local	Registration:	N409AE
Aircraft:	BELL HELICOPTER TEXTRON CANADA 206L-4	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Ground handling event	Injuries:	4 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 135: Air taxi & commuter - Non-scheduled - Air Medical (Medical emergency)		

Analysis

The air medical helicopter had responded to a call for service, and after landing was sitting idle with the engine running and its rotors turning while the flight medical crew and two local volunteer fire department personnel transferred a patient from a stretcher into the helicopter. Once the patient was loaded, a flight medical crew member told the fire department volunteers they could leave the rotor disk area while they finished securing the patient inside the helicopter. A flight medical crew member then observed one of the volunteers move the stretcher back and away from the helicopter; however, the two volunteers did not leave the rotor disc area. A few moments later, a flight medical crew member watched the unattended and unsecured stretcher roll downhill toward the helicopter's spinning tail rotor. The stretcher collided with the tail boom and the tail rotor resulting in substantial damage to both tail rotor blades and minor damage to the tail boom.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

Failure of the volunteer fire department personnel to properly monitor and secure a stretcher, which resulted in it rolling into the helicopter's tail rotor.

Findings

Personnel issues

Monitoring equip/instruments - Emergency services personnel

Factual Information

History of Flight

Standing-engine(s) operating	Ground handling event (Defining event)
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Pilot Information

Certificate:	Airline transport; Commercial; Flight instructor	Age:	49, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	4-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane; Helicopter	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Helicopter; Instrument helicopter	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	September 18, 2025
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	November 1, 2025
Flight Time:	4821 hours (Total, all aircraft), 691 hours (Total, this make and model), 2691 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 50 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 20 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	BELL HELICOPTER TEXTRON CANADA	Registration:	N409AE
Model/Series:	206L-4	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:	2010	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	52413
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	Seats:	5
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	April 15, 2026 AAIP	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	4450 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Turbo shaft
Airframe Total Time:	8971 Hrs as of last inspection	Engine Manufacturer:	ROLLS-ROYCE
ELT:	C126 installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	250-C30P
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	650 Horsepower
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	On-demand air taxi (135)
Operator Does Business As:	On file	Operator Designator Code:	EVCA

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Night
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KJWN, 495 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	17 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	02:00 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	125°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 3900 ft AGL	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:		Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	5 knots / None	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	360°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.95 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	12°C / 8°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Chapmansboro, TN	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	Company VFR
Destination:	Chapmansboro, TN	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:		Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	3 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	4 None	Latitude, Longitude:	36.340755,-87.16658

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Read, Leah
Additional Participating Persons:	Ian Mullins; FAA/FSDO; Nashville, TN
Original Publish Date:	July 30, 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=202916

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](#).