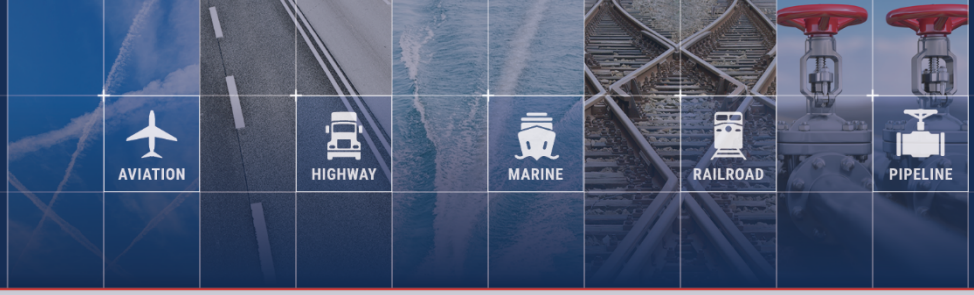

Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Tuscumbia, Alabama	**Accident Number:**	ERA26LA285
Date & Time:	July 29, 2026, 10:08 Local	**Registration:**	N29AE
Aircraft:	Bell 206L-3	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Defining Event:	Collision during takeoff/land	**Injuries:**	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 135: Air taxi & commuter - Non-scheduled - Air Medical (Discretionary)		

Analysis

The pilot was making a right pedal turn in an attempt to land on the helipad when the tail rotor struck a standpipe on the fuel farm. The helicopter began to become unstable, but the pilot immediately lowered the collective and the helicopter landed upright on the helipad. Neither the pilot nor the two crew members were injured. Postaccident examination of the helicopter revealed damage to the tail rotor blades and substantial damage to the tail rotor gear box. The operator reported that there were no preaccident mechanical malfunctions or failures of 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 keep the tail rotor clear of an obstacle while attempting to land.

Findings

Personnel issues	Monitoring environment - Pilot
Aircraft	Altitude - Not attained/maintained
Environmental issues	Ground equipment - Effect on equipment

Factual Information

History of Flight

Landing	Collision during takeoff/land (Defining event)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial; Flight instructor; Private	**Age:**	40,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	**Seat Occupied:**	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	**Restraint Used:**	4-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Helicopter	**Second Pilot Present:**	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Helicopter	**Toxicology Performed:**	
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Without waivers/limitations	**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	January 29, 2026
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	November 5, 2025
Flight Time:	2888.6 hours (Total, all aircraft), 752 hours (Total, this make and model), 2823 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 21 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 3.9 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 0.2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Bell	**Registration:**	N29AE
Model/Series:	206L-3	**Aircraft Category:**	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:	1986	**Amateur Built:**	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	**Serial Number:**	51191
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	**Seats:**	3
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	July 27, 2026 AAIP	**Certified Max Gross Wt.:**	4450 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		**Engines:**	1 Turbo shaft
Airframe Total Time:	20371 Hrs as of last inspection	**Engine Manufacturer:**	Rolls Royce
ELT:	C126 installed, not activated	**Engine Model/Series:**	RR-250-C30P
Registered Owner:	AIR EVAC EMS INC	**Rated Power:**	650 Horsepower
Operator:	AIR EVAC EMS INC	**Operating Certificate(s) Held:**	On-demand air taxi (135)
Operator Does Business As:	Air Evac Lifeteam	**Operator Designator Code:**	EVCA

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	**Condition of Light:**	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	MSL,550 ft msl	**Distance from Accident Site:**	4.7 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	09:53 Local	**Direction from Accident Site:**	15°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	**Visibility**	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	**Visibility (RVR):**	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	6 knots / None	**Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:**	/
Wind Direction:	70°	**Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:**	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.87 inches Hg	**Temperature/Dew Point:**	28°C / 26°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	Tuscumbia, AL	**Type of Flight Plan Filed:**	Company VFR
Destination:	Tuscumbia, AL	**Type of Clearance:**	None
Departure Time:		**Type of Airspace:**	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	N/A	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	2 None	**Aircraft Fire:**	None
Ground Injuries:		**Aircraft Explosion:**	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	**Latitude, Longitude:**	34.727147,-87.703227(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Read, Leah
Additional Participating Persons:	Pat Bruce; FAA/FSDO; Birmingham, AL
Original Publish Date:	October 15, 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=203515

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.