



# National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

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<b>Location:</b>	WEST DELTA 105B, GM	<b>Accident Number:</b>	FTW99LA077
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	02/01/1999, 1056 CST	<b>Registration:</b>	N6603X
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Bell 206L-3	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	1 None

**Flight Conducted Under:** Part 91: General Aviation - Positioning

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## Analysis

The helicopter's tail rotor made contact with the offshore platform's windsock during final approach to landing. The pilot heard a buzzing sound followed by a right yaw. He then executed a hovering autorotation to the platform. Inspection of the windsock support frame showed signs of tail rotor impact damage.

## 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 with the oil platform's windsock on final approach to landing.

## Findings

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Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT  
Phase of Operation: APPROACH - VFR PATTERN - FINAL APPROACH

### Findings

1. OBJECT - WIND SOCK/INDICATOR
2. (C) CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

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Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING  
Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY DESCENT/LANDING

## Factual Information

On February 1, 1999, at 1056 central standard time, a Bell 206L-3 helicopter, N6603X, was substantially damaged upon impact with a wind sock during final approach at the West Delta 105B offshore platform in the Gulf of Mexico. The commercial pilot, who was the sole occupant of the helicopter, was not injured. The helicopter was registered to and operated by Petroleum Helicopters, Inc., of Lafayette, Louisiana. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and a company flight plan was filed for the Title 14 CFR Part 91 positioning flight which originated from the South Pass 25 offshore platform at 0915.

The pilot was positioning the helicopter to the West Delta 105B offshore platform when, according to the pilot's written statement, he heard a "buzzing sound followed by a right yaw." The pilot then executed a hovering autorotation to the platform. The pilot stated that he suspected that the tail rotor blades contacted the wind sock during the approach. The wind sock's internal frame showed evidence of a tail rotor blade strike.

Maintenance personnel reported that one of the tail rotor blades was missing approximately the outboard four inches. The tail rotor gear box was torn from its mounting and the tail boom had sustained structural damage.

According to company flight records, the pilot had accumulated 3,893 hours total flight time, of which 2,517 hours were in the Bell 206L-3.

## Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Commercial	<b>Age:</b>	36, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine Land	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Right
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	Helicopter	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	Seatbelt, Shoulder harness
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	Airplane; Helicopter	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	No
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	07/01/1998
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>		<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	
<b>Flight Time:</b>	3893 hours (Total, all aircraft), 2517 hours (Total, this make and model), 3108 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 152 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 49 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 12 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Bell	Registration:	N6603X
Model/Series:	206L-3 206L-3	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	51412
Landing Gear Type:	Emergency Float; Skid	Seats:	7
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	01/10/1999, AAIP	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	4150 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	61 Hours	Engines:	1 Turbo Shaft
Airframe Total Time:	9971 Hours	Engine Manufacturer:	Allison
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	250-C30P
Registered Owner:	PETROLEUM HELICOPTERS, INC.	Rated Power:	650 hp
Operator:	PETROLEUM HELICOPTERS, INC.	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	On-demand Air Taxi (135)
Operator Does Business As:	PHI	Operator Designator Code:	HEEA

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	, 0 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	0 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	0000	Direction from Accident Site:	0°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear / 0 ft agl	Visibility	8 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 15000 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	0 ft
Wind Speed/Gusts:	10 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	330°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	18° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	SOUTH PASS 25, GM (NONE)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	Company VFR
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	0915 CST	Type of Airspace:	Class G

## Airport Information

Airport:	WEST DELTA 105B HELIPORT (NONE)	Runway Surface Type:	Concrete
Airport Elevation:	70 ft	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	Full Stop

## Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	

## Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	NICOLE LUPINO	Report Date:	04/25/2001
Additional Participating Persons:	JAMES W BRADEN; BATON ROUGE, LA		
Publish Date:			
Investigation Docket:	NTSB accident and incident dockets serve as permanent archival information for the NTSB's investigations. Dockets released prior to June 1, 2009 are publicly available from the NTSB's Record Management Division at <a href="mailto:pubinq@ntsb.gov">pubinq@ntsb.gov</a> , or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at <a href="http://dms.ntsbt.gov/pubdms/">http://dms.ntsbt.gov/pubdms/</a> .		

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The Independent Safety Board Act, as codified at 49 U.S.C. Section 1154(b), precludes the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an incident or accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report. A factual report that may be admissible under 49 U.S.C. § 1154(b) is available [here](#).