



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

Location:	ROUND TOP, TX	Accident Number:	FTW98FA167
Date & Time:	04/02/1998, 0817 CST	Registration:	N7734A
Aircraft:	Bell 206B	Injuries:	1 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The non-instrument rated private helicopter pilot encountered fog and low ceilings while en route on a 132 mile VFR cross country flight. Witnesses near the accident site reported observing the helicopter in a nose down attitude and hearing the sound of impact with trees. Visibility in the vicinity of the accident site was reported by several witnesses to be as low as 100 feet and as high as 1/4 of a mile. The ceiling was obscured due to fog. Residents in the area reported that fog has a tendency to form that time of the year around sunrise. Physical evidence and signatures at the accident site indicate that the helicopter impacted the trees and terrain in a 45 degree nose low attitude in a slight right turn. The accident occurred at 0807 local time and sunrise occurred at 0619. The pilot had accumulated a total of 187 flight hours. No evidence of pre-impact mechanical failure or malfunction was observed at the accident site. No anomalies were found during the investigation that could have prevented normal flight operation.

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's attempted VFR flight into instrument meteorological conditions. Contributing factors were fog, low ceilings, and trees.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER
Phase of Operation: UNKNOWN

Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - LOW CEILING
 2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - FOG
 3. (C) VFR FLIGHT INTO IMC - ATTEMPTED - PILOT IN COMMAND
 4. LACK OF TOTAL INSTRUMENT TIME - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: UNKNOWN

Findings

5. (F) OBJECT - TREE(S)
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Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	41
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Instrument Rating(s):	None
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Instructor Rating(s):	None
Flight Time:	187 hours (Total, all aircraft), 187 hours (Total, this make and model), 13 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Bell	Registration:	N7734A
Model/Series:	206B 206B	Engines:	1 Turbo Shaft
Operator:	STEWARD ASHMAN	Engine Manufacturer:	Allison
Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None	Engine Model/Series:	250C20
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	, 0 ft msl	Weather Information Source:	Witness
Lowest Ceiling:	Obscured / 0 ft agl	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	4 knots / , 70°
Temperature:	16° C	Visibility	0.25 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	AUSTIN, TX (AUS)	Destination:	HOUSTON, TX (HOU)

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None

Latitude, Longitude:

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	HECTOR R CASANOVA	Adopted Date:	02/16/2001
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 pubin@ntsb.gov , or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/ .		

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