



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	Placerville, CA	Accident Number:	LAX01LA068
Date & Time:	01/01/2001, 1529 PST	Registration:	N94LW
Aircraft:	Wallace Rotorway EXEC 152	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 None

Flight Conducted Under: Part 91: General Aviation - Instructional

Analysis

The student pilot finished building the helicopter and this was its first flight. He had received 11 hours of flight instruction and was endorsed for hover only solo. The pilot reported that he was 1-2 feet in the air and as he began backing the helicopter the tail rotor guard struck the ground, the main rotor struck the tail boom, and the left skid struck the ground. The skid collapsed and the helicopter rolled over. After exiting, the pilot attempted to right the helicopter, but fuel leaking from the fuel cap ignited when it contacted the exhaust. The helicopter was destroyed in the subsequent fire.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The failure of the student pilot to maintain adequate ground clearance while hovering.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: HOVER

Findings

1. TERRAIN CONDITION - OPEN FIELD
2. (C) ALTITUDE/CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (C) AIRCRAFT CONTROL - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: ROLL OVER
Phase of Operation: HOVER

Factual Information

On January 1, 2001, at 1529 hours Pacific standard time, a Wallace Rotorway Exec 152 amateur-built helicopter, N94LW, was destroyed when it rolled over from a hover and subsequently caught fire at a private airstrip near Placerville, California. The helicopter was operated by the pilot under the provisions of 14 CFR Part 91. The student pilot, the sole occupant, was not injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and no flight plan was filed for the local solo instructional flight, which was departing at the time of the accident.

The pilot stated to a deputy sheriff, who responded to the scene, that he had just finished building the helicopter and this was its "maiden voyage." He had been receiving instruction towards his private pilot certificate and was endorsed for hover only solo.

He reported that he was hovering in a dirt field and as he started to back the helicopter the tail rotor guard struck the ground, the main rotor flapped down striking the tail boom, and the left skid hit the ground and collapsed. The helicopter then rolled over.

After exiting the helicopter the pilot attempted to roll the helicopter upright but fuel leaking from the fuel cap ignited when it contacted the engine exhaust. The helicopter was destroyed in the subsequent fire.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Student	Age:	39, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt, Shoulder harness
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	Last FAA Medical Exam:	10/10/2000
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	10/19/2000
Flight Time:	11 hours (Total, all aircraft), 11 hours (Total, this make and model)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Wallace	Registration:	N94LW
Model/Series:	Rotorway EXEC 152	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	Yes
Airworthiness Certificate:	Experimental	Serial Number:	71851
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Condition	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1380 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	1 Hours at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Rotorway
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	RW-152
Registered Owner:	DANIEL WALLACE	Rated Power:	152 hp
Operator:	ANTHONY COLBERT	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	MHR	Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:	1545 PST	Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 20000 ft agl	Visibility	7 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	Calm /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.17 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	14° C / 4° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	Placerville, CA (61Q)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Placerville, CA	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	1529 PST	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	Private	Runway Surface Type:	Dirt
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:		IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

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

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	FRANK H BAILY	Report Date:	11/06/2001
Additional Participating Persons:	Nancy Leippe; FAA FSDO; Sacramento, CA		
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 pubinq@ntsb.gov , or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at http://dms.ntsbt.gov/pubdms/ .		

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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](#).