



# National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

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<b>Location:</b>	Estes Park, CO	<b>Accident Number:</b>	DEN03LA062
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	04/02/2003, 1620 MST	<b>Registration:</b>	N56SM
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Hughes 369D	<b>Injuries:</b>	2 None
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General Aviation - Business		

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## Analysis

The pilot said they were capturing bighorn sheep with a net canon. He said he was pursuing a group of animals up rising terrain (11,200 feet) when his rotor speed began to deteriorate. He tried to turn the helicopter around, but hit the ground breaking the helicopter's right skid. Subsequently, the aircraft rolled over onto its right side, and its main rotor blades separated from the helicopter. The density altitude at the time of the accident was calculated to be 13,068 feet.

## Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the failure of the pilot-in-command to maintain clearance from terrain. Factors include the high density altitude and the pilot-in-command's improper in-flight planning.

## Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER  
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING - TURN TO REVERSE DIRECTION

### Findings

1. (F) IN-FLIGHT PLANNING/DECISION - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - HIGH DENSITY ALTITUDE
3. TERRAIN CONDITION - MOUNTAINOUS/HILLY
4. (C) CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

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Occurrence #2: ROLL OVER  
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING - TURN TO REVERSE DIRECTION

### Findings

5. LANDING GEAR,SKID ASSEMBLY - COLLAPSED

## Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Commercial	<b>Age:</b>	54
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Multi-engine Land; Multi-engine Sea; Single-engine Land; Single-engine Sea	<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	Airplane; Helicopter
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	Balloon; Helicopter	<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	Airplane Multi-engine; Airplane Single-engine; Helicopter; Instrument Airplane
<b>Flight Time:</b>	11000 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1000 hours (Total, this make and model), 10000 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 35 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 35 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 3 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Hughes	<b>Registration:</b>	N56SM
<b>Model/Series:</b>	369D	<b>Engines:</b>	1 Turbo Shaft
<b>Operator:</b>	Acme Rocket Sleds Inc.	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Allison
<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	250-C20B
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General Aviation - Business		

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual Conditions	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	FNL, 5016 ft msl	<b>Weather Information Source:</b>	Weather Observation Facility
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	Unknown	<b>Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:</b>	14 knots / , 250°
<b>Temperature:</b>	20° C	<b>Visibility:</b>	10 Miles
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>			
<b>Departure Point:</b>	Estes Park, CO (NONE)	<b>Destination:</b>	

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 None	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>	1 None	<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	40.524444, -105.863889		

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	James F Struhsaker	<b>Adopted Date:</b>	12/30/2003
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	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.nts.gov/pubdms/">http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/</a> .		

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), established in 1967, is an independent federal agency mandated by Congress through the Independent Safety Board Act of 1974 to investigate transportation accidents, determine the probable causes of the

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accidents, issue safety recommendations, study transportation safety issues, and evaluate the safety effectiveness of government agencies involved in transportation. The NTSB makes public its actions and decisions through accident reports, safety studies, special investigation reports, safety recommendations, and statistical reviews.

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.