



# National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

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<b>Location:</b>	Myrtle Grove, LA	<b>Accident Number:</b>	DFW05LA252
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	09/01/2005, 1100 CDT	<b>Registration:</b>	N59539
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Bell 206B	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	4 Minor
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General Aviation - Business		

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## Analysis

The private pilot was flying three passengers for hire along the Mississippi River, to inspect and look for missing barges following Hurricane Katrina, when he experienced a loss of tail rotor control. At an altitude about 200 feet above ground level (agl), the helicopter took a sudden right turn and climbed approximately 100 feet before it started spinning in a clockwise direction and descended. The helicopter continued to spin until it impacted a barge and fell into the river about 300 feet from the riverbank. The pilot and passengers were able to egress the sinking helicopter and swam to shore unassisted. A review of Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) airman records revealed the pilot held a private pilot certificate with ratings for airplane single-engine land and helicopter. Multiple attempts to obtain a completed Pilot/Operator Aircraft Accident Report (NTSB Form 6120.1/2) from the pilot were unsuccessful. As of January 23, 2006, the helicopter had not been located or recovered.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's loss of control in flight for undetermined reasons.

## Findings

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Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT  
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

### Findings

1. (C) REASON FOR OCCURRENCE UNDETERMINED  
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Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER  
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

### Findings

2. TERRAIN CONDITION - WATER

## Factual Information

On September 1, 2005, about 1100 central daylight time, a single-engine Bell 206B helicopter, N59539, was substantially damaged following a loss of control while maneuvering near Myrtle Grove, Louisiana. The private pilot and his three passengers sustained minor injuries. The helicopter was registered to Altar Helicopters LLC and was operated by the pilot. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and a flight plan was not filed for the 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 business flight. The local flight originated from MYU Heliport (LS97), near Luling, Louisiana, about 1000.

A passenger, who was on board the helicopter when the mishap occurred, reported the accident to a representative of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) on September 29, 2005. An inquiry to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), by the NTSB investigator-in-charge (IIC), revealed that the pilot had not reported the accident.

The passenger reported that a verbal agreement was made between an employee of Memco Barge Line of St. Louis, Missouri, and MYU Helicopters of Luling, Louisiana. The agreement was that a helicopter and pilot would be provided, at an hourly rate of \$2,400, to fly three Memco Barge Line employees along the Mississippi River to inspect and search for missing barges following Hurricane Katrina.

The passenger further reported that while maneuvering at an altitude about 200 feet above ground level (agl) the helicopter took a sudden right turn and climbed approximately 100 feet before it started spinning in a clockwise direction and descending. The helicopter continued to spin until it impacted a barge and fell into the river about 300 feet from the riverbank. The pilot and passengers were able to egress the sinking helicopter and swim to shore unassisted.

In a telephone conversation with the IIC, the pilot reported that he was unable to control the helicopter after he lost tail rotor control. He added that he held a commercial pilot certificate, but that it was at the bottom of the river in his flight bag. Multiple attempts to obtain a completed Pilot/Operator Aircraft Accident Report (NTSB Form 6120.1/2) from the pilot were unsuccessful.

A review of Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) airman records revealed the pilot held a private pilot certificate with ratings for airplane single-engine land and helicopter.

The pilot held a second-class medical certificate that was issued on May 13, 2004 with the limitation, "MUST WEAR CORRECTIVE LENSES."

As of January 23, 2006, the helicopter had not been located or recovered.

## Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	43, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Front
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	Seatbelt, Shoulder harness
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 With Waivers/Limitations	Last Medical Exam:	05/01/2004
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:			

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Manufacturer:	Bell	Registration:	N59539
Model/Series:	206B	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	1432
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Unknown	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3200 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Turbo Shaft
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	Allison
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	250-C20
Registered Owner:	Altar Helicopters LLC	Rated Power:	420 hp
Operator:	On file	Air Carrier Operating Certificate:	None

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Observation Facility, Elevation:	MSY, 4 ft msl	Observation Time:	1153 CDT
Distance from Accident Site:	50 Nautical Miles	Condition of Light:	Day
Direction from Accident Site:	160°	Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Temperature/Dew Point:	28°C / 25°C
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility	10 Miles
Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	5 knots, 90°	Visibility (RVR):	
Altimeter Setting:	29.94 inches Hg	Visibility (RVV):	
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Luling, LA (LS97)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	1000 CDT	Type of Airspace:	

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 Minor	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>	3 Minor	<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	4 Minor		

## Administrative Information

**Investigator In Charge (IIC):** Timothy J LeBaron **Adopted Date:** 04/25/2006

**Additional Participating Persons:** Ted Adams; Federal Aviation Administration; 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 [pubinq@ntsb.gov](mailto:pubinq@ntsb.gov), or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at <http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/>.

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