



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

Location:	Grand Ridge, FL	Accident Number:	MIA06FA039
Date & Time:	01/01/2006, 1900 CST	Registration:	N442DH
Aircraft:	Robinson R44	Injuries:	3 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Ferry		

Analysis

The commercial pilot was ferrying a helicopter with two passengers/friends under Title 14, CFR Part 91 when the helicopter collided with trees and terrain in a wooded area at night, in instrument meteorological conditions. Witnesses related that the helicopter had landed near a hotel and truck stop, and the pilot and passengers had inquired about renting rooms. The pilot and passengers elected not to rent rooms, but walked to the truck stop and had a meal. After the meal, the helicopter was seen departing to the south. The helicopter did not arrive at its destination, and a search was initiated. A witness in a car on a nearby freeway, about 6 miles from the truck stop, reported to the local sheriff's office three days after the accident, that he had seen an explosion south of the freeway the night of the accident. Searchers located the helicopter in thick woods, in trees about 60 feet tall. The wreckage was extensively fragmented, consistent with a high speed impact with the trees. An on-site examination of the helicopter disclosed no evidence of any preimpact mechanical anomalies. Weather in the vicinity at the time of the accident was reported as 300 feet overcast, visibility 1.75 miles in mist, with thunderstorms nearby. The pilot did not have an instrument rating, and the helicopter was not equipped with instrumentation for flight into instrument meteorological conditions. Toxicological samples from the pilot disclosed extremely high levels of methamphetamine. Methamphetamine is a rarely prescribed drug, and its use is not approved for pilots. Methamphetamine is highly addictive, and is most widely used as an illegal recreational drug. The amount of methamphetamine in the pilot's system was approximately 50 times higher than expected from a single dose of a prescription drug. Use of methamphetamine can result in marked personality changes, psychosis, irrational and impulsive behavior, irritability, hyperactivity, and other symptoms.

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's continued flight into known adverse weather, and his impairment, which resulted in an in-flight collision with trees and terrain during cruise flight.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: CRUISE

Findings

1. OBJECT - TREE(S)
2. LIGHT CONDITION - NIGHT
3. (C) FLIGHT INTO KNOWN ADVERSE WEATHER - CONTINUED - PILOT IN COMMAND
4. (C) IMPAIRMENT(DRUGS) - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

5. TERRAIN CONDITION - GROUND

Occurrence #3: FIRE
Phase of Operation: OTHER

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	28
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Instrument Rating(s):	None
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Instructor Rating(s):	None
Flight Time:	1400 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1200 hours (Total, this make and model), 1300 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Robinson	Registration:	N442DH
Model/Series:	R44	Engines:	Reciprocating
Operator:	Francisco Rodriguez	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None	Engine Model/Series:	O-540
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Ferry		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions	Condition of Light:	Night
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KMAI, 110 ft msl	Weather Information Source:	Weather Observation Facility
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 300 ft agl	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	8 knots / , 100°
Temperature:	21° C	Visibility	1.75 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:	Mist		
Departure Point:	Grand Ridge, FL	Destination:	North Palm Ba., FL (F45)

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	2 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	On-Ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Latitude, Longitude:	30.667222, -85.060000		

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Timothy W Monville	Adopted Date:	12/20/2007
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.nts.gov/pubdms/ .		

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