



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

Location:	Walkerville, MI	Accident Number:	CEN13LA086
Date & Time:	12/01/2012, 1420 CST	Registration:	N3755Z
Aircraft:	BELL 47G-2	Injuries:	1 Fatal, 1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The passenger reported that the pilot was maneuvering the helicopter over an area of tree-covered marsh at a low altitude when the helicopter entered a descent, collided with trees, and impacted the ground on its left side. An examination of the wreckage found damage consistent with the main rotor blades being driven by the engine when they contacted the trees. Although the passenger reported hearing a loud sound before the helicopter started descending, postaccident examination of the helicopter revealed no evidence of preimpact mechanical malfunction or failure that would have precluded normal operation. The circumstances of the accident are consistent with the pilot failing to maintain altitude while maneuvering at low airspeed and low altitude, which resulted in the helicopter descending into trees.

Flight Events

Maneuvering-low-alt flying - Low altitude operation/event
Maneuvering-low-alt flying - Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's failure to maintain altitude while maneuvering, which resulted in a collision with trees. Contributing to the accident was the pilot's decision to fly at a low altitude, which did not provide enough margin to recover from the descent.

Findings

Aircraft-Aircraft oper/perf/capability-Performance/control parameters-Altitude-Not attained/maintained - C
Personnel issues-Task performance-Use of equip/info-Aircraft control-Pilot - C
Personnel issues-Action/decision-Info processing/decision-Decision making/judgment-Pilot - F

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	49
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Instrument Rating(s):	None
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Instructor Rating(s):	None
Flight Time:	4000 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Manufacturer:	BELL	Registration:	N3755Z
Model/Series:	47G-2	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Operator:	On file	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
Air Carrier Operating Certificate:	None	Engine Model/Series:	VO-435-A1
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Observation Facility, Elevation:	KFFX	Weather Information Source:	Weather Observation Facility
Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 1000 ft agl
Condition of Light:	Day	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	7 knots, 110°
Temperature:	6°C / 3°C	Visibility	4 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:	Haze; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Hart, MI	Destination:	Hart, MI

Wreckage and Impact Information

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

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Jason T Aguilera	Adopted Date:	01/30/2014
Investigation Docket:	http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/search/dockList.cfm?mKey=85720		

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