



# National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

<b>Location:</b>	Carthage, NY	<b>Accident Number:</b>	ERA15CA127
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	02/01/2015, 1516 EST	<b>Registration:</b>	N20059
<b>Aircraft:</b>	SCHWEIZER 269C 1	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>	Controlled flight into terr/obj (CFIT)	<b>Injuries:</b>	2 None
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

## Analysis

The non-helicopter-rated pilot reported that while performing a bank, at low level, above a frozen river, he lost sight of the horizon and the helicopter impacted the frozen river. The helicopter came to rest on its left side, which resulted in substantial damage to the main rotor, tailboom, and cockpit structure. The non-helicopter-rated pilot further reported to a representative of the Federal Aviation Administration and Sheriff's Deputies that the helicopter was functioning "normally" at the time of impact and that "somehow I must have lost sight of the horizon in all the snow and ice." No preimpact malfunctions or abnormalities were noted with the helicopter that would have precluded normal operation.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The non-helicopter-rated pilot's improper decision to operate the helicopter at low-level and his inability to adequately see the horizon over snow and ice, which resulted in controlled flight into terrain.

## Findings

<b>Aircraft</b>	Altitude - Not attained/maintained (Cause)
<b>Personnel issues</b>	Decision making/judgment - Pilot (Cause)
<b>Environmental issues</b>	Whiteout - Contributed to outcome Snowy/icy terrain - Contributed to outcome

## Factual Information

### History of Flight

Maneuvering-low-alt flying	Loss of visual reference
Maneuvering	Controlled flight into terr/obj (CFIT) (Defining event)

### Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	56
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Unknown
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 With Waivers/Limitations	Last Medical Exam:	01/01/2011
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:			

### Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Manufacturer:	SCHWEIZER	Registration:	N20059
Model/Series:	269C 1	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	0053
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	Seats:	3
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	06/27/2014, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	
Time Since Last Inspection:	192 Hours	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	2797 Hours	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	HO-360-C1A
Registered Owner:	FLY NORTH INC	Rated Power:	
Operator:	On file	Air Carrier Operating Certificate:	None

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Observation Facility, Elevation:	GTB, 691 ft msl	Observation Time:	1458 EST
Distance from Accident Site:	6 Nautical Miles	Condition of Light:	Day
Direction from Accident Site:	309°	Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 8500 ft agl	Temperature/Dew Point:	-18° C / -24° C
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 11000 ft agl	Visibility	10 Miles
Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	8 knots, 60°	Visibility (RVR):	
Altimeter Setting:	30.13 inches Hg	Visibility (RVV):	
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Unknown, NY	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Unknown, NY	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:		Type of Airspace:	Class G

## Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 None		

## Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Shawn Etcher	Adopted Date:	07/29/2015
Additional Participating Persons:	Mark Denny; FAA/FSDO; Albany, NY		
Publish Date:	07/29/2015		
Note:	This accident report documents the factual circumstances of this accident as described to the NTSB.		
Investigation Docket:	<a href="http://dms.ntsb.gov/pubdms/search/dockList.cfm?mKey=90710">http://dms.ntsb.gov/pubdms/search/dockList.cfm?mKey=90710</a>		

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