



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Data Summary

Location:	Carthage, NY	Accident Number:	ERA15CA127
Date & Time:	02/01/2015, 1516 EST	Registration:	N20059
Aircraft:	SCHWEIZER 269C 1	Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	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.

Flight Events

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

Probable Cause

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

Aircraft-Aircraft oper/perf/capability-Performance/control parameters-Altitude-Not attained/maintained - C
 Personnel issues-Action/decision-Info processing/decision-Decision making/judgment-Pilot - C
 Environmental issues-Conditions/weather/phenomena-Ceiling/visibility/precip-Whiteout-Contributed to outcome
 Environmental issues-Physical environment-Terrain-Snowy/icy-Contributed to outcome

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	56
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine Land	Instrument Rating(s):	None
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Instructor Rating(s):	None
Flight Time:			

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Manufacturer:	SCHWEIZER	Registration:	N20059
Model/Series:	269C 1	Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Operator:	On file	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
Air Carrier Operating Certificate:	None	Engine Model/Series:	HO-360-C1A
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Personal		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Observation Facility, Elevation:	GTB, 691 ft msl	Weather Information Source:	Weather Observation Facility
Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 11000 ft agl
Condition of Light:	Day	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	8 knots, 60°
Temperature:	-18° C / -24° C	Visibility	10 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Unknown, NY	Destination:	Unknown, NY

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

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Shawn Etcher	Adopted Date:	07/29/2015
Note:	This accident report documents the factual circumstances of this accident as described to the NTSB.		
Investigation Docket:	http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/search/dockList.cfm?mKey=90710		

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