



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	Fessenden, ND	Accident Number:	GAA19CA473
Date & Time:	07/31/2019, 0830 CDT	Registration:	N3066T
Aircraft:	Robinson R44	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Low altitude operation/event	Injuries:	1 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 137: Agricultural		

Analysis

The pilot reported that, during the agricultural application flight into rising terrain, he saw power wires. He said he "lowered the collective...slightly nose down" to attempt to go under the wires, but the helicopter struck the wires, rolled right, and started descending. The helicopter touched down, bounced, spun right, and then rolled onto its left side. The helicopter sustained substantial damage to the tail rotor drive system. The pilot reported that there were no preaccident mechanical failures or malfunctions 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 pilot's failure to maintain clearance from wires during an agricultural application flight.

Findings

Aircraft	Altitude - Not attained/maintained (Cause)
Personnel issues	Monitoring environment - Pilot (Cause)
Environmental issues	Wire - Effect on operation (Cause)

Factual Information

History of Flight

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

Certificate:	Flight Instructor; Commercial	Age:	49, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land	Seat Occupied:	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane; Helicopter	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	Airplane Single-engine; Instrument Airplane; Instrument Helicopter	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Without Waivers/Limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	03/28/2019
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	06/20/2019
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 3866 hours (Total, all aircraft), 239 hours (Total, this make and model), 3740 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 153 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 136 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Robinson	Registration:	N3066T
Model/Series:	R44 II	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:	2007	Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Utility	Serial Number:	11939
Landing Gear Type:	Skid;	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	07/26/2019, 100 Hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2500 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	1330.1 Hours as of last inspection	Engine Manufacturer:	Lycoming
ELT:	C91A installed, activated, did not aid in locating accident	Engine Model/Series:	IO-540-AE1A5
Registered Owner:	Executive Air Taxi Corp	Rated Power:	260 hp
Operator:	Dakota Helicopters, Inc.	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	Agricultural Aircraft (137)

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	K46D, 1608 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	23 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	1435 UTC	Direction from Accident Site:	121°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 4300 ft agl	Visibility	10 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:		Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	13 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	160°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.05 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	20° C / 17° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Fessenden, ND (D54)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Fessenden, ND	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	0810 CDT	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	47.649167, -99.629167 (est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Michael A Hicks	Report Date:	04/13/2020
Additional Participating Persons:	Vance Emerson; FAA; Fargo, ND		
Publish Date:	04/13/2020		
Note:	This accident report documents the factual circumstances of this accident as described to the NTSB.		
Investigation Docket:	http://dms.ntsb.gov/pubdms/search/dockList.cfm?mKey=99976		

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), established in 1967, is an independent federal agency mandated by Congress through the Independent Safety Board Act of 1974 to investigate transportation accidents, determine the probable causes of the accidents, issue safety recommendations, study transportation safety issues, and evaluate the safety effectiveness of government agencies involved in transportation. The NTSB makes public its actions and decisions through accident reports, safety studies, special investigation reports, safety recommendations, and statistical reviews.

The Independent Safety Board Act, as codified at 49 U.S.C. Section 1154(b), precludes the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an incident or accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report. A factual report that may be admissible under 49 U.S.C. § 1154(b) is available [here](#).