



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

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Air Safety Investigator
Office of Aviation Safety - Central Region

NTSB Accident Number: CEN12LA480 – N73252 at Akeley, Minnesota

The investigator-in-charge (IIC) had several telephone conversations and exchanged e-mail messages with emergency responders, with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Inspectors, the operator, and the pilot. Below is a summary of those contacts.

Dispatch records from 9-1-1 emergency show that the initial call for this accident was received at 1245 hours on July 25, 2012. Senior law enforcement officers that responded to the scene reported that there were no direct witnesses to the accident.

Utility crews responded to the scene and carefully examined all of the nearby electric power lines. They found no evidence of damage to the power lines and no evidence of a wire-strike by the helicopter.

FAA inspectors from the Minneapolis Flight Standards District Office responded to the scene and examined the wreckage. They reported that the helicopter was found resting on its left side about 600 feet north of east-west power lines. There was significant impact damage to the main rotor blades. Impact scars showed that the helicopter was northbound on a low-level agricultural application flight when it impacted terrain.

The tail rotor (T/R) separated and one T/R blade was found about 50 feet to the southwest and the other separated T/R blade was found about 50 feet to the north. The single fuel tank did not rupture, there was not a significant fuel spill, and there was no postimpact fire.

The FAA Inspectors reported that they examined the skid landing gear, the spray booms, and the main rotor blades. They found no evidence of a wire strike on any portion of the helicopter and there was no evidence of a wire-strike on any of the three different nearby power lines.

The operator reported that the helicopter had been previously modified with a single seat cockpit that was significantly narrower than the original helicopter design. The main rotor system had been modified by the removal of the stabilizer bar which resulted in a more responsive reaction to cyclic control inputs. In addition the horizontal stabilizer on the tail had been removed and that resulted in a different response to a sudden pilot input to an in-flight change in nose up or nose down pitch.

On August 06, 2012, the pilot, Mr. Brandon Edeal, reported that he was flying the helicopter northbound and was descending into the field from the south end over the power lines when he felt a vibration. He then experienced a sudden loss of control when the helicopter began an uncommanded abrupt nose low attitude followed by an uncommanded yaw to the right. He reported that he was unable to “flare” before impact with terrain. He also reported that he did not lose engine power and the main rotor rpm did not change before impact.

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