

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
Vehicle Recorder Division
Washington, DC 20594

May 28, 2015

On Board Image Recorder

Specialist's Summary Report
By George Haralampopoulos

1. EVENT

Location:	Silt, Colorado
Date:	01/27/2014
Aircraft:	Bell 206-L3, N207DS
Operator:	Delta Bravo Sierra Inc
NTSB Number:	CEN14FA122

2. GROUP

A group was not convened.

3. SUMMARY

On January 27, 2014, about 1118 mountain standard time, a Bell model 206L-3 helicopter, N207DS, was destroyed when it impacted a wire and terrain near Silt, Colorado. The pilot and two passengers were fatally injured. The aircraft was registered to and operated by Delta Bravo Sierra Inc. under the provisions of 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 135 as an on-demand air taxi flight. The helicopter was performing aerial surveillance of power transmission lines when the accident occurred. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the flight, which was not on a flight plan. The local flight originated from the Garfield County Regional Airport (RIL), Rifle, Colorado, about 1045.

According to a representative of HOT/SHOT Infrared Inspections, Inc., the contract with Holy Cross Energy required video recording of the entire flight. During examination of the wreckage, two recording devices were found and retained for further examination. One of the recording devices had a secure digital (SD) memory card installed. The SD card slot of the other recording device was empty. A second SD card was not located during the wreckage examination.

Two DVR's, one which contained an SD card, were sent to the National Transportation Safety Board's Image Laboratory for readout and evaluation.

4. DETAILS OF INVESTIGATION

The NTSB Vehicle Recorder Division's Image Laboratory received an SD card with the following files on it:

00000001.asf
00000002.asf
00000003.asf

File 00000003.asf, contained video footage of the accident event, while 00000001.asf and 00000002.asf, did not contain information pertinent to this investigation. All references to recorded video are specific to file 00000003.asf for the duration of this report.

4.1. Video File

The video file from the SD card was 22 minutes and 53 seconds in length. The video contained footage from an onboard infrared camera and the radio communications and satellite radio from the intercom system.

4.2. Timing and Correlation

The onboard infrared camera was connected to a GeoStamp+ device¹, which overlays the recorded video with information such as GPS location and UTC time.

Timing of the video was established by using the video's overlaid GPS time in UTC. The beginning of the video occurred at 1753:43 UTC. All times are referenced in UTC for the rest of this report.

4.3. Summary of Recorded Contents

In agreement with the Investigator-In-Charge, a group did not convene and a summary report was prepared.

The camera was pointed outside the accident aircraft with free rotation in all axes. The video began in the air. The voices of crew members were heard throughout the flight. For the majority of the video, the aircraft followed a series of power lines through various terrains. Throughout the entire flight, professional and casual conversation was audible between the two passengers.

At 1815:20, crew members discussed turning right to follow a perpendicular set of power lines and return later to capture a previous data point. The crew members turned right and carried out intermittent casual conversation for the duration of the flight.

¹ More information on the GeoStamp+ device can be found in the docket under "GPS Data Device Factual Report"

At 1816:21, a pair of deer came into the view of the infrared camera. During this time, a crew member remarked “see the deer?” where another crew member responded “where”. A follow up remark was heard: “see the white things on the screen” followed ultimately by an acknowledgement.

At 1816:29, intersecting power lines came into the screen (figure 1), immediately after the power lines passed, the video began to shake, with expletives heard in the background. The camera shaking intensified and discordant audio was audible until the end of the recording at 18:16:36.

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Figure 1. Photo extracted from video showing intersecting power lines. Blue line depicts direction of travel.

