



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Mitchell Gallo
Aviation Accident Investigator
Central Region

Date: March 8, 2015
Person Contacted: Kevin Borgman
Participants:

Federal Aviation Administration: Randal Ottinger, Del Deathridge
Airbus Helicopters: Seth Butner
Air Evac: Michael Koenes; Donald Lambert; Michael Benton
NTSB Accident Number: CEN15FA164

Narrative:

During a telephone conversation, Kevin Borgmann stated that the pilot, Ronald Rector, said during the approach prior to the accident approach over the cancer center to St Louis University Hospital helipad (MO55) that there was a 25 knot wind. During the prior approach, the helicopter tail was "sideways a little bit." The pilot said it was going to be "a little rough." The tail was sideways when they came in. Mr. Borgmann said that he had been employed as a medic for about a year. He had been on flight that landed at MO55 "couple of times" and had flown with other Air Methods pilots. The pilot said that "it was a little windy." The wind sock was pointing towards the elevator shaft door and was "straight out." The wind sock light was illuminated at the time of the approach. He said that the approach was a "straight-in" and he felt a "little drop" when they came in. The helicopter did not slow down during the approach. The approach felt lower than usual and about 10-20 feet lower than that used by other pilots he had flown with. He had flown with Ronald Rector "a lot" and "more than any other pilot there." He said Mr. Rector was "different" from the other pilots and that he was "kind of a different character." He said the "he did not get a sense of confidence" from Mr. Rector, which he did not get with other pilots. He said that he felt during some of the rooftop approaches flown by Mr. Rector, that Mr. Rector was nervous because of the way Mr. Rector talked about the approach and his "checking;" it seemed "more hectic." He said that he did not see the helicopter takeoff to refuel after they had landing at MO55. Mr. Rector said that he wanted to stay on the helipad. Mr. Borgmann said that he told Mr. Rector that the helicopter could not remain on the helipad because there were other helicopters coming in. He said that he did not know the pilot's source of wind information when the pilot said the winds 25 knots. Mr. Borgmann said that he had

flown about 30 flights with Mr. Rector, of which about 10-20 percent was to an elevated helipad and most were to a ground helipad. Mr. Borgmann said during the prior approach, the nose of the helicopter was directed away from the elevator and Mr. Rector said that he would “straighten out” when the helicopter got close in. He said that Mr. Rector would make use of a checklist when he flew. He said that Mr. Rector would shut down the helicopter on the helipad more often than other pilots that Mr. Borgmann had flown with. He said that Mr. Rector needed to shut down the helicopter at MO55 to remove a helicopter seat. The patient that was transported to MO55 was not a critical patient. Mr. Borgmann thought that the pilots contacted the hospital through AIRCOM to inform the hospital of a landing. When Mr. Rector would depart from the helipad, he would normally talk to the air traffic control tower. He said that Mr. Rector was “very attentive to detail” and “maybe methodical.” He said the Mr. Rector talked “a lot more” about things to Mr. Borgmann than other pilots. Mr. Borgman said that the pilot were always wearing night vision goggles (NVG) to see but did not usually use them on landing. He said that Mr. Rector would always use NVG when they were landing at a “really bright pad.” He said the pilots say that “there are a lot of dynamics that come into play” when landing and it is “windy.” He said if there is a lot of wind, it is “always weird” coming in for approach to land at MO55. He said that during the approach, the helicopter was “just above” the helipad and everything “sounded normal.” He said that during the approach, the helicopter seemed “lower than normal” and seemed closer to the elevator than the middle of the helipad while the helicopter was about a “football field” or “half of a football field” away from the helipad.

Mitchell Gallo
Air Safety Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board