

5/18/2015

Inspector Statement N165RV Accident

At approximately 1:00 PM inspectors RIO and DJM met with land owner Glenn Stumpf [REDACTED] Columbia, IL (cell: [REDACTED] & home [REDACTED]).

Glenn Stated:

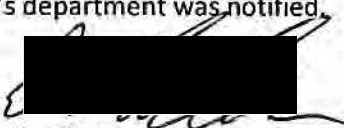
The spraying operation started about 2PM on 5/13/2015. The chemical refill and fuel refill was from a truck and trailer located on Andy Rd approximately 1 mile from the accident scene. When the helicopter returned to refill Glenn would fill chemical into the helicopter chemical holding tank. The chemicals were positioned on the trailer in a tank and filled the helicopter tank via hose. The chemicals were refilled approximately 12 times during the operation prior to accident. Approximately every other landing the helicopter was being re-fueled. Jesse Moats was on scene and operated the fuel re-filling. Fuel was stored in a 110 gallon tank located in the truck bed. A 20 ft black hose and nozzle was used to reach the helicopter. The helicopter was always filled on the pilot side. Jesse Moats was there for the entire operation. When the helicopter needed fuel Jesse would grab the nozzle and tap the landing gear skid several times before inserting into the pilot side fuel tank opening. No grounding strap was ever used. The fuel tank used to refill the helicopter appeared to be new in condition. Glenn remembered only a couple times the helicopter was shut down so the pilot could take a rest break. The Helicopter was able to spray approximately 20 acres per re-fill and was under contracts through Glenn Stumpf and Farm Service of Illinois Bill Schnarre ([REDACTED]). The cost was [REDACTED].

Glenn said the helicopter had been spraying from an east to west direction. Throughout the day, the helicopter always sounded to be running good and never showed signs of having any troubles. Glenn did mention Josh seemed to use good judgment when landing and taking off from the re-fill trailer (executed smoothly and stayed clear of trees and homes).

Glenn and Jesse did not see the accident happen.

Approximately 6:30 PM, on the last run, Glenn and Jesse became suspicious when an excessive amount of time passed and they had not seen the return of the helicopter. They got in a truck and proceeded to drive to the field being sprayed. Glenn found Josh Shivers walking towards the road from the field he was spraying acting very shaken and disturbed. Josh told Glenn he was about 10 ft above the crop – the engine shutoff and a buzzer sounded and the helicopter went down. It all happened very fast he said – a matter of a few seconds.

Josh, Jesse and Glenn went to the scene to inspect the damage. Glenn said the only thing that was touched was the tail rotor but immediately placed back where they had found it. The Monroe County Sheriff's department was notified.


Dennis Mueller