

Search and Rescue Pilot Statement

On 27 Feb. 2017 at approximately 10:40am I received a call that 1371 should have arrived at KHUM. I tried to reach 1371 on the company frequency a few times with no success, while preparing 131WM to launch. I called Houma tower to see if they had established communications with 1371 and they informed that they had not. A few minutes later I was told to launch by Jim Roth and departed KHUM around 11:00am. I departed to the last known location of 1371 and established communications with Westwind Helicopters in Santa Fe, Tx so, they could guide me to his exact location.

After approximately 30 minutes of searching I found 1371 16 miles south of Houma. I notified the director of operations when I found the aircraft and shortly after he informed me that the coast guard had been alerted. Once I found the aircraft I began orbiting and looking for any signs of movement but unfortunately there was none. The wreckage appeared to be scattered over a quarter of a mile beginning with the tail boom. Most of the debris that could be seen from the air was north of the tail boom and included pieces of main rotor blades, seats, aircraft panels, life raft, and passenger life vest. It took another twenty minutes to find the pilots body which was north east of the tail boom and not moving. There was no life vest or shirt on the body. I remained on location until the coast guard arrived. The weather in the area was as follows Visibility 5-7 Miles and Ceiling's above 700ft.

Kerry Gonzales