

On May 20th, 2018, I arrived at the airport at approximately 0700 to pre-flight the MD 500 362JS and discuss the work planned for the day in the Job Hazard Analysis. I found no discrepancies on the aircraft. The crew and I discussed the shield wire repairs that needed to be done and how we planned to do it. Chance Mills and I decided it would be a good opportunity to train Ryan Cardwell on skid work and brought him to observe Chance and to do some of the work himself. We waited for the hotline hold clearance until around 0930 when we took off for the first worksite. With Ryan observing, we successfully repaired the first shield wire and decided not to work on the second structure due to it being in a densely populated area. After assessing the third structure, we decided it would be a good start for Ryan and we landed in order for Ryan and Chance to switch positions. We proceeded to repair the third and fourth structure without incident. the 5th structure we worked on was where the accident occurred. The shield wire had already fallen from the shield wire arm and was laying on top of the conductor arm on a steel h frame. We had just hovered into position over the conductor arm where we were in the process of evaluating the situation. The plan was to hang a chain hoist down below the aircraft to hook the shield wire and then attach the other end of the hoist to the static arm in order to jack the shield wire back into position. We had not begun work yet, and I was hovering in place over the conductor arm. The moments that followed all happened very quickly but I noticed a rumbling and the aircraft descending. I recall trying to control the aircraft then being on the ground. I am not sure if I lost consciousness in the impact. We impacted the marsh area left side down, and I was partially submerged, I egressed the aircraft and found chance lying next to the aircraft, just above the main rotor head. He was conscious with a badly broken arm and back pain. I started to look for Ryan but I was unable to locate him in the deep marsh. I had to suspend my search for Ryan because the engine was still idling, igniting a fire around the aircraft. The emergency fuel valve was jammed and I could not find the collective throttle to shut fuel off. I grabbed the fire extinguisher and sprayed it in the intake of the aircraft in order to choke the engine out and used the rest to attempt to put out the fires but it quickly ran out. Fearing the fire was going to spread, I cut chance free and helped him move away from the aircraft. I assessed his arm and used my belt as a tourniquet before returning to the aircraft to try to find Ryan. I was again unsuccessful. I lost my cell phone in the crash so I began attempting to call for help on the aircraft radios. While I was trying to call for help, chance had managed to call 911 from his cell phone. While talking to 911 three good Samaritans showed up in a swamp buggy. They helped direct 911 to our location, helped keep the fires at bay, and they brought the first responders to us. I was taken by ambulance to the hospital.

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