

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATIONS SAFETY BOARD
Office of Aviation Safety
Central Region

SUMMARY AIRCRAFT EXAMINATIONS

-- CEN18LA229 --

A. ACCIDENT

Location: Oshkosh, WI
Date: June 9, 2018
Aircraft: Robinson R44, N529DW

B. PARTICIPANTS

Pamela Sullivan
Aviation Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

Peter Hupfer
Principal Maintenance Inspector
Federal Aviation Administration

C. ACCIDENT SUMMARY

On June 9, 2018, at 1229 central daylight time, a Robinson R44 helicopter, N529DW, collided with cables during an initial climb after taking off from a field in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. The pilot was fatally injured. The helicopter was substantially damaged. The helicopter was registered to and operated by MF Helicopters LLC as a Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 135 aerial photography flight. Visual meteorological conditions existed near the accident site at the time of the accident, and a flight plan had not been filed for the local flight. The helicopter was en route to Wittman Field (OSH), Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

D. GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The wreckage was retrieved by Myers Aviation and examined at their facility on June 10, 2018.

Summary of Accident Site and Aircraft Examinations

The entire structure of the helicopter sustained impact damage. Both skids remained attached to the helicopter. The floats were not deployed during the accident sequence but were inadvertently deployed during the wreckage examination. The canopy was crushed to the right with the left side of the canopy missing. The floor of the cockpit was crushed upward.

The main rotor blades remained attached to the helicopter. Continuity of the main rotor system was established from the cockpit controls to the blades. There was a 180 ft section of 7 strand steel cable wrapped around the main rotor hub and both rotor blades. The cable cut through one of the blades from the trailing edge to the blade spar at a location that was 66 inches from the blade tip. The cable cut through the other blade at a position that was about 38 inches from the blade tip. Numerous cable marks were visible on both blades.

The tail rotor separated from the helicopter during the accident sequence and was not located. The tailboom, tailrotor drive shaft, and tailrotor push-pull tube were fractured about 4 ft aft of the forward flex plate. The tailrotor drive shaft remained attached at the forward flex plate which was deformed. Continuity of the tailrotor drive system was established from the cockpit to the fractures in the tailboom.