

Memorandum of Conversation

Date: 16 July 2019

Time: 1330 central daylight time

Conversation Including: Mike Patton;
VP/Chief Operating Officer of Winco, Inc.

Conversation Regarding: CEN18LA026, N138WH

Duration of Call: 20 Minutes



Summary & Factual Information from Conversation:

Mr. Mike Patton is the Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Winco, Inc, the operator of the helicopter.

NTSB Investigator Fox asked Mr. Patton if the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has regulations and/or specifications for the type of materials and configurations of long lines used during external cargo operations. Mr. Patton responded that at the time of the accident the helicopter was being operated under Part 133 Class B, and as such the two linemen were considered crewmembers (not passengers) for the powerline construction flight. Mr. Patton noted that the FAA did approve their hook installation; however, because the operation was conducted under Part 133 Class B the FAA did not regulate, specify, or approve the long line or the harnesses worn by the linemen.

Mr. Patton noted that the long line used during the flight was a 7/16 inch Amsteel Blue synthetic rope made of Dyneema SK-75 synthetic fiber that had a break strength of 21,500 lbs. Mr. Patton stated that the use of Amsteel Blue synthetic rope has been an industry standard for at least 15-20 years. Mr. Patton stated that the use of synthetic rope, specifically Amsteel Blue, is advantageous for powerline work because it is non-conductive and has a higher breaking strength than a similarly sized braided steel cable.

Mr. Patton stated that the use of an abrasion-resistant cover is typically used when the helicopter operates near a tower structure. The abrasion-resistant cover is meant to protect the long line during incidental contact with sharp edges on tower structures. Mr. Patton added that it is unlikely that the abrasion-resistant cover would offer much protection if the long line had prolonged lateral movement against a braided steel cable. Mr. Patton also noted that the use of a steel long line is not practical when working on powerlines due to the potential for electrocution.

Mr. Patton further explained that the pilot selects the length of the long line for a specific mission after he/she considers the required length to position the lineman at the specified workstation and to keep the helicopter above any wires, structures, or obstacles. The pilot chooses the shortest long line available that ensures obstacle clearance, which increases positive control of the cargo/linemen during the flight.

--- End of interview summary ---

I can attest that the above summary and factual information was taken on the above stated day, and is correct to the best of my knowledge:

Signed: _ Andrew Todd Fox (NTSB Air Safety Investigator) _

Dated: _ 16 July 2019 _