



National Transportation Safety Board

Office of Aviation Safety – Central Region

Interview Summary: Jansen Jelinek, Lineman – CEN19FA020

Date: November 3, 2019

Location: Hampton Inn Lobby

Interviewer: Courtney Liedler, NTSB - Denver

Interviewee: Jansen Jelinek

During the Interview, Mr. Jelinek stated the following:

He had worked for Air2 as a journeyman lineman for 2 years.

Mr. Jelinek stated he was picked up from the landing zone (LZ) after lunch. Ely and Alec were dropped off at a different structure first and then the pilot came back to the LZ to pick up he and Aaron. The wind was coming from the northwest to southeast; the helicopter positioned with the nose pointing west. Aaron was going to hang his tools on the wooden structure first, the helicopter hovered for about 15 to 20 seconds. Mr. Jelinek was “dangling” from the short haul line waiting for Aaron to finish. Once Aaron had hooks in the pole, he “suddenly dropped in free fall.” It became really bouncy for a second and then Mr. Jelinek heard a “boom.” The helicopter had hit the structure. At this time, Mr. Jelinek was still attached to the short haul line and Aaron was getting ready to detach.

Mr. Jelinek said the pilot had “pickled the load” (released the short haul lines from the helicopter) before the helicopter hit the structure. He “shot up” into the air and then fell onto Aaron's line, hanging from the pole. He was dropped from the helicopter and there was no noise after he dropped. It sounded like the “engine flamed out” but he was not sure if it was before or after hitting the structure. Mr. Jelinek believed something went wrong with the helicopter. He noted that this steel structure was taller than all of the others they had worked on in the morning flights.

Mr. Jelinek stated the everyone looks at the weather. He knew the pilot used preflight for weather. They were aware of the rain coming in and estimated they had a window of about 45 minutes to an hour. They would be able to drop the power line from the old tower in that time. But they are also able to work in the rain. He said the winds were 10 kts gusting to 20 kts on the ground and in the air, it was 15 kts gusting to 20 kts. He stated he asked the pilot about the weather before the flight because he knew there was rain moving in and he was “trying not to get rained on.” The pilot told them that “if it was safe, they would

fly.” They had flown in windy conditions worse than they were during the accident. The pilot has made the determination on other occasions that it was too windy, and he did not want to be too close to the structures if it was too windy.

Mr. Jalinec stated that as far as he was aware, they did not receive any fuel prior to the accident flight. He recalled they had 150 pounds of fuel before lunch and they could fly for another 30-45 minutes after reporting 150 pounds remaining. He explained they had begun flying between 0800-0830 that morning and had completed 3 structures prior to lunch. They had fueled multiple times in the morning. Their lunch break began about 1215-1220. Mr. Jalinec stated he did not smell or see fuel in the water. The flight from the LZ to the structure was about a 1-minute flight and they were there a few more minutes after that to disconnect to the structure.

After the accident, he was hanging from Aaron’s line and Aaron was yelling for someone to check on the pilot. Mr. Jalinec hooked to the pole, cut off his tools, and climbed down. The pilot’s face was in the water and his arm was floating on top. Half of the helicopter was filled with water since it was laying on its side. He thought the pilot may be unconscious but then saw blood coming from the pilot. The superintendent and crew lead were at the helicopter, they pulled the pilot from the helicopter and brought him to the mats. They were parked at the mats on the dirt roadway when the accident occurred.