

Mr. Chase Cormier

Houston Police Department

Mr. Cormier,

The NTSB/FAA request that you provide a written statement surrounding the events associated with the flight of N8375F, occurring on the morning of Saturday, May 2, 2020.

1. Please provide a written statement of your recollection of the event, starting with the initial dispatch of the flight, any unusual occurrences during the course of the flight, up to and including the accident. As you prepare your statement, please keep in mind the following questions.

The flight began just like any other mission profile with HPD Air Support Division. This begins with a preflight of the aircraft, review of maintenance records, completing a Baldwin safety assessment, looking at the weather using HEMS tool and or Foreflight. All was completed and no abnormalities or concerns of flight were found.

We departed Hobby and began our patrol flight over the city of Houston. We were called to several scenes before the incident occurred and successfully completed each call / mission. When on scene we orbit to the right to allow for the TFO and the FLIR mounted camera to have the best view of the scene or situation.

2. Did you perceive any mechanical issues with the aircraft? Anti-torque pedals? Engine? Main Rotor? Main Transmission?

Upon preflight and initial inspection of the helicopter I did not perceive any mechanical issues of any component. Upon take off or in flight, before the incident I did not perceive any mechanical issues with any systems of the helicopter.

3. Did you hear any unusual sounds or warning horns or see any lights on the caution/warning panel?

During the flight I did not hear any unusual sounds, warning horns, caution lights, or warning lights. When the incident occurred, I began performing emergency procedure due to loss of tail rotor. I was under the goggles and began searching for a suitable landing area or for any potential obstructions. I do not recall any lights on the dash. While not necessarily a sound, I do remember a strong vibration in the controls just before the loss of the tail rotor.

4. What was your flight profile? Hovering? Orbiting? Maneuvering? Airspeed? Altitude and altitude above the ground?

We were orbiting at this time. I do not recall the airspeed but we typically fly 30 knots or greater. We are constantly adjusting to maintain altitude and airspeed while orbiting.

5. What was the temperature at your altitude?

At this time, I do not recall the temperature at our altitude. I had checked it, notated it with Officer Knox on the ground as well as flight. I do recall it seemed normal around 75 degrees while at altitude.

6. What was the aircraft configuration? Power setting? Collective position? Anti-torque pedal position? Main rotor RPM?

The aircraft was configured for mission patrol orbit. We typically orbit around 700 – 1000 feet. The power setting was at cruise power. The collective was constantly adjusted to maintain airspeed and altitude. We typically orbit at 30 knots or above. The anti-torque pedals are adjusted constantly due to changes in power to adjust for winds, and altitude due to power changes. Main rotor RPM was in the green arc which is 102-104%.

7. If orbiting, were you making left or right orbits?

We were making right orbits.

8. If hovering, where was the wind in relationship to the helicopter? Headwind? Tailwind? From the left/right or quartering?

My best recollection is that the winds were out of the south that night with ATIS listing them as 4 knots at Hobby if I recall correctly. When orbiting the wind in relation to the aircraft is constantly changing but I am always mindful. I am constantly evaluating the winds and mindful of the direction while in flight and orbiting and did the night of the incident. At this time, I cannot recall which direction the aircraft was oriented at the time of the incident.

9. What were the winds like? Gusting? Steady? Calm? Estimated wind speed and direction?

My best recollection is that the winds were out of the south that night with the ATIS listing them as 4 knots at Hobby on the ground. My best recollection is the winds were steady at altitude at out of the south, I do not recall that they were strong or gusting.

10. What was the gross weight at takeoff?

Gross weight with Officer Knox, and myself with gear was approximately 2838lbs.

11. Did anything unusual occur just prior to the aircraft beginning to spin?

Yes. Just before the aircraft started spinning, I felt very strong vibrations in the controls then the tail immediately started spinning causing the nose of the aircraft to spin to the right.

12. When the aircraft began to spin, do you remember what actions were taken to stop the spin? Yes. The spins were very violent, I pushed the collective down and nosed the aircraft forward pushing the cyclic forward to gain forward airspeed and airflow over the vertical stabilizer. The aircraft was still spinning very violently so I also reduced the power.

As the aircraft nosed over in a right banking turn and started to slow the rate of motion, I began introducing the power back. The aircraft began to start flying straight and I began looking for a safe landing spot as well any potential obstructions. The area was very dark with very little ambient light, but I was wearing my issued Night Vision Goggles. We were still in a nose down position and I looked right through the NVG's and observed a large area covered in trees and a bayou. I then turned my head to the left straight forward and observed a large building that we were quickly approaching. At this time, I pushed the cyclic to the right to avoid the large building and began pulling back on the cyclic to begin climbing. I felt the aircraft level off and was thinking we were about to start climbing but that was the last memory I recall before being pinned in the wreckage. I do not recall if we impacted terrain such as a tree or side of another building that ultimately caused the crash.

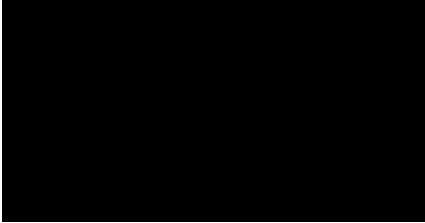
13. Can you explain the role of the tactical flight officer onboard, and what onboard systems?

The tactical flight officer has numerous responsibilities. Upon initial start, the TFO completes a fire watch of the start sequence while outside the aircraft. Once inside the TFO turns on all mission related equipment such as computer screen, Churchill navigation application, FLIR camera, and Police Radio. Before taking off the TFO writes down the ambient outside ground temperature that the Pilot observes, as well as Turbine Outlet Temperature while on the ground. Prior to taking off the TFO contacts the Detective dispatcher to notify that we will be departing Hobby airport and if any calls are holding. If so, TFO notifies the pilot to make a determination on what departure to request. If not, the pilot will then pick a departure and begin patrolling the city until we are dispatched. While in the air the pilot again observes the ambient temperature and TOT, for the TFO to notate. The TFO monitors the police radio's during the flight and helps with situational awareness for aircraft separation, and terrain avoidance such as towers. During a mission, the TFO will utilize the navigation equipment to find the location, use the FLIR to search and attempt to locate suspects or vehicles and then notify ground units of any hazards or safety concerns. The TFO is a force multiplier for the ground units due to an aerial surveillance advantage.

After the completion of your statement please date, sign and return the document to:

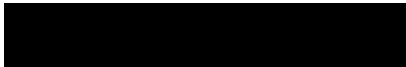
Daniel Prince

FAA, Houston FSDO



Date: May 23, 2020

Signature:



Chase Cormier

Senior Police Officer, Houston Police Air Support Division