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Aviation Safety - Central Region

Subject: CEN22LA318, N64272

Contact: Gregory Thurston, FAA

FAA Inspector Gregory Thurston assisted in investigation the helicopter accident involving N64272, a Hiller UH-12E. Inspector Thurston provided the following information:

The pilot had been spraying a potato field in the accident helicopter for about 5 hrs the day of the accident. After returning to the support truck, the pilot started the first spray swath when he felt a small jolt and the helicopter hit the ground.

The helicopter was recovered prior to examination or notification of the FAA and NTSB.

The operator reported that the main rotor blades, main rotor hub, and transmission had separated from the helicopter. The blade marked "yellow" was found about 500 ft west of the wreckage. The blade marked "blue" was found 300 ft east of the wreckage. The mast with part of the transmission attached from found about 150 ft northeast of the blue blade.

A review of maintenance entries found that the main rotor hub (p/n 51437-23, s/n 20067) was installed on the helicopter on 12-14-2018. The hub had been overhauled and records showed 1,116.4 hrs since new and 0 hrs since overhaul. On that log entry, the aircraft total time was listed as 9,441.4 hrs.

On July 2, 2022, a 100-hour inspection and dye penetrate examination in compliance with AD 73-20-03 (main rotor hub dye penetrant inspection) were performed at Hobbs time of 1,353.1 hours and a total aircraft time of 10,276 hrs.

At the time of the accident, the helicopter had about 10,285 hrs total time.

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