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Aviation Safety - Central Region

Date: December 21, 2022

Subject: CEN23LA064

Contact: FAA Inspector Aycock

On December 15, 2022, about 0815 central standard time, a Bell 206-L4 helicopter, N414RL, was substantially damaged when it was involved in an accident in the Gulf of Mexico, near Patterson, Louisiana. The pilot and two passengers sustained minor injuries. The helicopter was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 135 air taxi flight.

Aircraft examination completed on 12/21/22, by Inspector Aycock with assistance from Inspectors Riley and Doucet, Baton Rouge FSDO.

Based on the damage, scuffing, and paint transfers marks on the skids, they might not have even been airborne during the accident. The aft portion of the skid showed damage indicative of being dragged across the platform. The back right side of the skids had damage that indicated it likely hit the light or skirting or both and then rotated off the platform. They did not observe any mechanical malfunctions or failures that would have precluded normal operation.

Pilot has flown 200+ hours in the Bell 206 and 60+ hours in the Bell 407

Weight and balance. During the latest re-weigh the empty weight was really close to the aft limit but in the acceptable range.

Multiple maintenance logbooks entries of tail rotor binding. They changed tail rotor and no entries after that.

END