

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: CEN23LA385 (N19BH, Bell 206L-4) - Additional Questions/Suggestion
Date: Wednesday, August 30, 2023 14:13:33
Attachments: [FRA Burgad 8-27-23.PDF](#)
[08-27-2023AD Carey Lake Proficiency -W-Burgad \(002\).xism](#)

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Questions are answered in **Bold Blue lettering** answering your questions below. 4 attachments are added, FRAT, PASP for Carey Lake, Flagging picture, FRA time screen shot of when FRAT was filed on the 27th none of those have been proof read, they are exactly how we received / documented.

Mike, adding Tony Peltier to this email and asking him to assist with the answers. Tony is our Chief Pilot. I am currently tied up with some scheduling requirements.

Tony, please assist.

From: Hodges Michael [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2023 11:10 AM
To: Todd Kubista [REDACTED]
Cc: Sindt, Daniel L (FAA) [REDACTED]
Subject: CEN23LA385 (N19BH, Bell 206L-4) - Additional Questions/Suggestion

Hi Todd,

I have a few additional questions please regarding the accident.

1. How much experience does the pilot have with doing aerial firefighting operations (such as the number of seasons or years)? **Pilot is on his 3rd Season, initial carding 3-26-2021 most recent card was issued 3-22-23 with an expiration of 3-31-2024.**
2. Is the pilot qualified/carded to perform aerial firefighting operations at the federal level also, in addition to the state level? **USFS / DOI Interagency card to include State of Minnesota, Carded for the following missions under the MATOC standards. External load Belly hook, External load long line Greater than 50 feet. Long Line Test with 150 feet long line , Helitack / Passenger cargo Transport, Low Level Reconnaissance, Mountainous Terrain Flying, Water/retardant, Bucket operations.**

3. Does the pilot just fly the Bell 206 series for Brainerd Helicopter Service (BHS), or does he fly the Bell 407 series also? **The Pilot is only assigned duties in the 206 series with a 135-check ride on file satisfactory 1-20-23. Pilot has completed transition flight and ground training on the Bell 407 but we have not Completed a 135 competency check ride in the 407 and no job duties or flights have been completed part 91 or 135 in the 407. Total time last 12 months 206 series 324.9, Bell 407 30.5 --- Total time last 90 days 206 series 129.6, Bell 407 24.4**

4. What time did the pilot's duty day start on the day of the accident? **0930 Central**

5. Was there a formal preflight risk assessment conducted for the flight? If so, what was the overall risk rating (such as low, medium, high, etc.)? **Yes, our Company SMS Flight Risk Assessment tool was submitted and documented into our system at 0930 Central that day, with a risk number of 11, which is in the medium category. There was also a project aviation safety plan (PASP) completed by the pilot and crew together with a risk number of 13 which is low, the PASP has risk mitigations listed. Both are attached to this email.**

6. For the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) firefighters that were on the ground at the landing zone (LZ) working with the helicopter, has the pilot worked with this same crew before? **Yes the crew has been working together often since May. They have landed at the same location as well as worked multiple fires this season.**

7. How many times has the pilot utilized this LZ before (an estimate is fine)? **4 times With July 2nd being the most recent previous time the pilot had landed there.**

8. What was the estimated height of the grass at the LZ? **2.5 feet.**

9. I understand that there are various flags at the LZ to help find a specific spot to land with the helicopter. The pilot reported that the "deteriorated flags were difficult to find on the tall grass."

a. How many flags are at the LZ? **A picture of the "flagging" is attached, I was told it was marked on 4 corners and the last time it was marked was In June, the flagging is light duty flagging tape similar you would find on a hazard tree or to mark survey lines.**

b. What is the color of the flags? **Orange**

c. Who is responsible for replacing/repairing flags at the LZ if necessary? **The**

crewmembers are usually the ones who mark off the LZ, pilot can always add input if they would like additional improvements. The flagging is light and can easily be carried by the crew and can be put up or attached to vegetation / hazards very easily.

d. The pilot reported that the grass was “much taller than usual.” Is the grass typically mowed at the LZ? If so, who is responsible for the mowing operations? **The grass is not mowed, this is an unimproved landing area used to represent actual remote LZ they would typically use to configure for firefighting operations. In the spring of the year it is matted down from the weight of the snow and low, now it is tall. I would call the grass a tall wispy prairie grass.**

10. What was the estimated wind condition (direction and speed) at the time of the accident for the LZ? **South East light 3-5 knots.**

11. During the landing when the backpack impact occurred, was there a designated LZ coordinator/ground guide from the MDNR, that was in constant radio contact with the pilot, that was responsible for ensuring the LZ is clear of people, vehicles, equipment, etc.? **Yes both have FM radios and were communicating during previous operations. The pilot and crew also were with-in view of each other during the set down. There were designated crew, one looking for aerial hazards such as birds and other aircraft, and one looking for clearance of the touchdown zone as the pilot set down. This was reviewed before the flight was conducted and documented on the PASP. Due to the crew being down slope and the high grass, the line of sight to the tail rotor may not have been visible after returning to the site the next day. The crewmember looking at the aircraft for Clearance stated he was about to make a radio call but never did. FM radio communications were available, no hand signals were given to the pilot.**

12. I would like to please confirm that the orange backpack (with the radio and the tablet) that was impacted, all of those items are the property and responsibility of the MDNR? **Yes this is property and responsibility of the MNDNR.**

I know we talked previously about the topic if there is an event with a helicopter such as sudden stoppage, an over torque, an over temperature, etc., that the pilot is supposed to cease flight operations and contact company management for further guidance. Is this something that BHS would consider putting written guidance in their respective documents about this process? My reason for suggesting, is that this process is then written down and standardized, so everyone is on

the same page at the company. [Todd replied to this question in a separate email.](#)

Thank you again for your help.

Mike

Mike J. Hodges, MS
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