

STATEMENT RECEIVED FROM FAA INSP. MIKE PENDER

N266P ERA11LA297

This was the third departure from this production platform helideck (AL114CC) the day of the accident. The aircraft involved was a BH206L-4 with a Pilot, Co-Pilot, and one passenger on board. The winds were generally from the South, which due to obstructions meant that the departure would necessarily be to either the SW or SE. Each departure direction was used on the two previous departures as the wind gradually shifted from SE to SW. The winds were now out of the SW and favored that departure direction.

Due to the obstructions noted above, the pilot positioned himself for a WSW takeoff.

After clearing the edge of the platform the aircraft started a slow yaw to the right. The pilot put in full left pedal but it did not stop the turn which continued a full 360 degrees. As the second turn, with a faster rotation started, the pilot stated he didn't have a tail rotor and lowered the collective and rolled the throttle to idle. The pilot deployed the emergency floats and the aircraft impacted the water with a slight tail low position with a right drift. The aircraft rolled over immediately to the right but stayed afloat. The pilot egress through his broken out windscreen, the left seat pilot could not open her door under water so she egress through the pilot's open door, and the rear passenger egress through the left passenger door.

Inspected the aircraft and could not find any issue with the engine, tail rotor gearbox, tail rotor drive shaft, main gear box, or main rotor system. The aircraft impacted the water with low rotor speed.

- All long tail rotor drive shaft segments were connected.
- Tail Rotor gear box was turned, verified all drive shaft turned with tail rotor gear box.
- No unusual noise noted when tail gear box rotated in both directions.
- Tail rotor pedals moved in both directions, with no binding.
- Fuel control position in idle position, throttle also in idle position.
- Left hand aft tail rotor gear box mount cracked.
- Fwd Sta. 388 4" vertical crack at tail boom can attachment.
- #1 segment tail rotor drive shaft shows evidence of contact with drive shaft support bracket on FWD/AFT and Left/Right side of bracket.
- Right hand fwd seat crush panel collapsed as well as seat frame.
- Tail boom shows evidence that both tail rotor blades contact tail boom.
- Main gear box rotated with no binding.
- Main gear box coupling had no damage.

Airman stated that the wind direction was coming from the left front quarter of the helicopter when the Airman had uncommanded rotation. This could have put the helicopter into a "Main Rotor Disc Interference".