

Inspector Statement

Aircraft N480F, an amphibious Aviat Husky A1B was substantially damaged when it crashed while attempting to land on water. The pilot departed Lake Norman Airpark (14A) on Sunday, January 24, 2020 at approximately 1430 hours, intending to do a touch and go on nearby Lake Norman approximately 1.5 miles away. Upon touching down on the water, the aircraft flipped over and came to rest upside down. The pilot he stated he did not recall many events of the flight including if he retracted the landing gear after takeoff. He only realized the wheels were down after exiting the aircraft. Witnesses to the accident stated the landing gear was down on the aircraft when it crashed.

Post-crash investigation confirmed the landing gear handle was in the “Down Land” position, which coincided with the visual indicator on the floats. The pitot tube was also found to be wrapped in black vinyl type tape in a manner that impeded airflow into the component.

The accident flight was the first after an annual inspection was performed and the aircraft approved for return to service. A pitot static leak noted as a discrepancy during the inspection was deferred to be repaired later.

The pilot stated he performed a pre-flight inspection of the aircraft and did not notice any tape on the pitot tube. The recovery team diver, who was the only individual to have contact with the aircraft until it was extracted from the water, stated he did not alter the aircraft in any way, to include applying tape to the pitot tube.

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