



MEMORANDUM for RECORD

Ralph E. Hicks
Senior Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region Aviation

Date: March 1, 2022
NTSB Medical Officer Factual Information
NTSB Accident Number: ERA21LA191 – Forkston, PA

Reports provided:

According to autopsy report from the Office of the Coroner, Wyoming County, Pennsylvania, the cause of death of the pilot was blunt force trauma due to helicopter crash and the manner of death was accident. The examination to identify any natural disease was limited by extensive trauma.

Toxicology testing performed by the FAA Forensic Sciences Laboratory detected ethanol in the pilot's liver tissue at 0.048 grams per hectogram (gm/hg) and n-butanol in the pilot's liver tissue; no other tested for drugs were detected in his muscle tissue.

Ethanol is a social drug commonly consumed by drinking beer, wine, or liquor. It acts as a central nervous system depressant; it impairs judgment, psychomotor functioning, and vigilance. Ethanol is water soluble, and after absorption it quickly and uniformly distributes throughout the body's tissues and fluids. The distribution pattern parallels water content and blood supply of the tissue. Ethanol can be produced after death by microbial activity, sometimes in conjunction with other alcohols such as butanol. Extensive trauma increases the spread of bacteria and raises the risk of ethanol production after death