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Subject: ERA25LA240, Inspectors statement

Contact: Benjamin Vost, Aviation Safety Inspector, FAA

The following is an excerpt from the FAA on scene report of an accident involving Robinson R-44, N144WK, in Hawesville Kentucky provided by Benjamin Vost, Aviation Safety Inspector at the FAA Flight Standards District Office in Louisville Kentucky. The report contained the inspector's statement as well as photos of the power line station holding 5 power lines, 2 upper lines and 3 lower lines with the 3 lower lines severed.

The pilot was performing agricultural spaying of a corn field. High and low recon passes were completed before spraying operation were initiated. The first several spray passes were uneventful. On the Final pass prior to the accident, the aircraft's main rotor mast struck a known utility line, severing the blade links, the fuselage fell to the ground, impacting on the left side of the fuselage near the utility wire in the direction of flight. The pilot exited the destroyed aircraft with serious injuries. No post-accident fire or damage to property.

The pilot's statement and examination by on-scene investigators indicate that there appears to be no mechanical issues with the aircraft that contributed to the accident. The pilot identified the power lines on high and low recon passes and flew over the power lines on several spraying passes that lasted approximately an hour. In a written statement provided to FAA inspectors from the pilot, he states that as he approached the wires on the final pass prior to the accident, it appeared like the power lines had been moved or raised. He also states that if the wire was not moved then he just saw it too late. In his statement, the pilot says he made the split decision to go under the wire. In a report provided to the FAA inspectors prepared by the Hancock County

Sheriff's Department, the investigating sheriff states that the electric company and contractors were working nearby on the power line, clearing tree limbs from the power lines but at no time did they move the power lines. I also called the electric company and spoke with their representative, and he verified that the power lines had not been moved.