

On October 22nd, 2018 at approximately 5:10 pm, helicopter N4132H was involved in an accident at the Kaneohe Sandbar in Oahu, Hawaii.

The pilot was flying a Part 91 air tour on a circle island route with 2 passengers on board. While approaching the Kaneohe Sandbar, a large area of sand covered by shallow waters 2-5 feet deep located in Kaneohe Bay, the pilot lost consciousness and became incapacitated due to a previously undiagnosed heart condition. At the time of the accident, the pilot did not make any radio calls or report an emergency to nearby Kaneohe Tower. There is no evidence of pilot error or mechanical failure or that weather was a factor.

After the pilot lost consciousness, the helicopter began to descend. The pilot stated that during the descent, he was in a "dream-like" state and that in his dream he was flying a helicopter. He stated that he remembers saying to himself, "this is important, this is important" on the way down but that he doesn't remember the descent or impact to the ground. The male passenger sitting in the left rear seat stated that he shook the pilot but the pilot gave no response and did not wake up during the descent.

It appears that the helicopter descended at high speed and impacted the sandbar in approximately 2 feet of water under full power. It appears that the right skid was sheared off when it impacted coral on that side of the aircraft. There was coral lodged into the skid shoes of the right landing skid. The gear was pushed back and splayed on the right side of the aircraft. The forward and aft landing gear attach points were sheared on the right side of the aircraft. There was evidence along the lower airframe and engine area of ground contact at a high speed. Exhaust and intake damage revealed ground contact with forward motion.

All 3 occupants were initially helped by kayakers who were nearby. The occupants were taken into the harbor by authorities on jet skis. A boat could not reach the shallow area for the rescue. They were taken to the emergency room at a local hospital.

The pilot reported that he does not recollect the descent or crash into the sandbar. The first thing that he remembers after the accident is being helped on to the jet ski. Due to his lack of recollection, he was put into ICU at the hospital.

That night at the hospital, the pilot lost consciousness for approximately 10 minutes, and doctors had to revive him. The pilot was diagnosed as having had cardiac failure in which his brain fails to send the proper signals to his heart. Without the proper signals, his heart will slow down to rate at which he becomes unconscious. This appears to have been what lead to his loss of consciousness while in flight.

Due to this condition, the pilot underwent surgery the next day on October 23rd to get a pacemaker implanted. The pacemaker will monitor his heartbeat and regulate the signals if his heart doesn't beat at the proper rate.

The pilot also broke his left arm and underwent surgery on October 24th for his arm. The male passenger broke his right arm. The female passenger broke her foot and reported possible spinal injuries. Both passengers were discharged from the hospital October 23rd, the day after the accident.

The pilot has a current 2nd class medical and flight review. The pilot reported no medical history to the company. He has had no medical problems while working for the company or exhibited any indication of the medical condition that he appears to have experienced while in flight.