

Incident Report Hard Landing near Thompson Falls, MT  
MD600N N208MP S/N RN042

At 5.58am (Pacific Time) on Tuesday July-21-2020 I took off from our hangar at the airport in Sandpoint, Idaho (KSZT). The temperature was 18 degrees Celsius with calm winds and crystal clear blue skies. After 36 uneventful minutes enroute I landed at the LZ for our powerline construction job near Thompson Falls, MT at 7.34am (Mountain Time) and shut the helicopter down. The LZ is located at: N47°32.73' / W115°35.46'. On the way I did a power check on the engine which turned out to run +7 degrees on the good side.

Arriving in the LZ we had a safety briefing with the linemen, discussing the FAR 133 operations we were going to do that day. The first task was to clip 6 conductors and 1 static wire on one breakover structure located about 2 nautical miles from the LZ. I inspected the 60' longline that I planned on using and attached it to the belly hook of the aircraft. With the linemen in position I flew out there and was able to raise 3 phases. After about 8 minutes I landed in the LZ and shut the helicopter down to give the linemen some time to get into position for the next 3 phases. When the linemen called me on the radio letting me know they are in position, I started the helicopter and flew back to the structure. 6 minutes later we had the other 3 phases as well as the static wire risen and put in its shoes on the insulators and I headed back to the LZ. When I arrived at the LZ, I landed the hook in the same spot out in front of the aircraft and lowered the collective a bit to start a vertical descent to land. In that moment, I heard the engine and rotor RPM decrease and I felt the helicopter yaw to the left and starting to settle. Reactive I moved my head to the inside of the aircraft and thought "hover auto" as the maneuver to be executed. When I saw the trees in front of me rush up and the ground come closer at a fast pace, I yanked the collective up to use the remaining RPMr to cushion the landing as much as possible, thinking at the same time "this will be hard". In the next moment I heard and felt the landing gear contact the ground and absorb most of the impact as I came to rest on the ground. I did a quick self-check and realized that I was unharmed, the helicopter is not on fire and the blades were still spinning (slowly). I rolled the throttle to idle. Right after that, my mechanic, a helicopter mechanic from another helicopter operator and two ground men from a sub-contractor ran towards me and checked if I was ok. I gave my thumbs up and noticed that the engine was running, but at a speed well below the normal idle speed making a lot less RPM and noise. When I rolled the throttle off, the engine turned off and made an awful grinding (metal to metal) noise and stopped spinning almost immediately. I exited the helicopter and walked a few feet away and started to realize that I just had a sudden loss of engine power at a 60' hover and I was able to save my life and as much of the aircraft as possible.

**NOTE: The engine has 22.9 hours since it came from major repair.**

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