



National Transportation Safety Board

Aviation Accident Data Summary

Location:	JUNEAU, AK	Accident Number:	ANC99FA139
Date & Time:	09/10/1999, 1204 AKD	Registration:	N6007S
Aircraft:	Eurocopter AS-350B-2	Injuries:	1 Serious, 5 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 135: Air Taxi & Commuter - Non-scheduled - Sightseeing		

Analysis

The certificated commercial helicopter pilot, with five passengers aboard, was attempting to return to the Juneau International Airport after completion of an ice field sightseeing tour flight. During a gradual descent, over a large, featureless, and snow-covered ice field, a localized snow shower momentarily reduced his forward visibility. The pilot reported he slowed the helicopter to about 70 knots and attempted to use a mountain range on the left side of the helicopter for visual reference. He said: 'The visibility got to a point where I was unable to discern any topographic features, only a dark shape on the horizon.' He added that 'flat light conditions' contributed to his inability to recognize any topographical features on the ice surface. The helicopter continued to descend, struck the snow-covered ice field, slid about 150 feet, and nosed over. The pilot reported that there were no preaccident mechanical anomalies with the helicopter. The helicopter was not equipped with a radar altimeter, and the pilot did not hold an instrument rating. The pilot received no emergency instrument training from the company, nor did the company require him to demonstrate the ability to maneuver the helicopter solely by reference to the installed flight instruments. FAA Order 8400.10 requires Principal Operations Inspectors, and approved company check airmen, to have pilots demonstrate their ability to control a helicopter solely by reference to flight instruments during 14 CFR 135.293 competency checks for VFR-only helicopter operations. The operator's FAA-approved training manual did not require training or competency checks of the pilot's ability to maneuver the helicopter solely by reference to flight instruments.

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's continued flight into instrument meteorological conditions (IMC), and inadequate altitude/clearance. Factors associated with the accident were flat light and whiteout conditions, snow, and snow-covered terrain. An additional factor was the FAA's inadequate certification/approval of the operator's training manual, which did not require the operator to provide instrument training or instrument flight proficiency checks to its pilots.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT

Findings

1. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - OTHER
2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - WHITEOUT
3. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - SNOW
4. (C) VFR FLIGHT INTO IMC - CONTINUED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT

Findings

5. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - SNOW COVERED

6. (C) ALTITUDE/CLEARANCE - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND

7. (F) INADEQ CERTIFICATION/APPROVAL, OPERATION/OPERATOR - FAA(ORGANIZATION)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	27
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Instrument Rating(s):	None
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Instructor Rating(s):	Helicopter
Flight Time:	2400 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1190 hours (Total, this make and model), 2300 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 250 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 71 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Eurocopter	Registration:	N6007S
Model/Series:	AS-350B-2 AS-350B-2	Engines:	1 Turbo Shaft
Operator:	TEMSCO HELICOPTERS, INC.	Engine Manufacturer:	Turbomeca
Operating Certificate(s) Held:	On-demand Air Taxi (135)	Engine Model/Series:	ARRIEL 1D1
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 135: Air Taxi & Commuter - Non-scheduled - Sightseeing		

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Instrument Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	PAJ, 19 ft msl	Weather Information Source:	Weather Observation Facility
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 6500 ft agl	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	9 knots / , 90°
Temperature:	12° C	Visibility	10 Miles
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	, AK (JNU)	Destination:	

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	1 Serious, 4 Minor	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Latitude, Longitude:			

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): CLINTON O JOHNSON

Adopted Date: 08/10/2000

Investigation Docket: NTSB accident and incident dockets serve as permanent archival information for the NTSB's investigations. Dockets released prior to June 1, 2009 are publicly available from the NTSB's Record Management Division at pubinq@ntsb.gov, or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at <http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/>.

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