

Brief of Accident (Continued)

LAX07TA227

File No. 23933

07/23/2007

Happy Camp, CA

Aircraft Reg No. N205BR

Time (Local): 10:18 PDT

helicopter had already departed. Witnesses observed that as the blivets were set down on the ground, the helicopter drifted to the right and the main rotor blades contacted a 165-foot-tall tree about 15 feet from the top. The long-line, along with the blivets, remained attached to the helicopter as it made a turn to the left, stopped momentarily, and then flew downhill to ground impact. The helicopter impacted several trees and was destroyed by post impact fire. No anomalies were noted with the airframe and engine that would have precluded normal operation prior to the accident. The helicopter was approved for the pilot to operate the aircraft from the left seat. Visibility to the right side of the helicopter was partially obstructed by aircraft structure, passenger seats, and the seat headrests.

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Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: HOVER - IN GROUND EFFECT

Findings

1. TERRAIN CONDITION - CONGESTED/CONFINED AREA
 2. OBJECT - TREE(S)
 3. (F) CREW/GROUP COORDINATION - INADEQUATE - COMPANY/OPERATOR MANAGEMENT
 4. (F) UNSUITABLE TERRAIN OR TAKEOFF/LANDING/TAXI AREA - SELECTED - GROUND PERSONNEL
 5. (F) VISUAL LOOKOUT - REDUCED - PILOT IN COMMAND
 6. (C) CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

7. TERRAIN CONDITION - MOUNTAINOUS/HILLY

Findings Legend: (C) = Cause, (F) = Factor

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident as follows.
the pilot's failure to maintain clearance with the trees during a long-line operation. Contributing factors were the Forest Service's inadequate communication between crews, failure to properly assess the safety of the intended drop zone, reduced visibility to the right side of the helicopter, and the trees.