

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
199300130**

**Aerospatiale
SA.365C-3**

13 February 1993

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NOTE: All air safety occurrences reported to the ATSB are categorised and recorded. For a detailed explanation on Category definitions please refer to the ATSB website at www.atsb.gov.au.

Occurrence Number: 199300130 **Occurrence Type:** Accident
Location: 34km NW DUNGOG NSW
State: NSW **Inv Category:** 4
Date: Saturday 13 February 1993
Time: 1915 hours **Time Zone** ESuT
Highest Injury Level: Minor
Injuries:

	Fatal	Serious	Minor	None	Total
Crew	0	0	0	1	1
Ground	0	0	0	0	0
Passenger	0	0	1	3	4
Total	0	0	1	4	5

Aircraft Manufacturer: Aerospatiale
Aircraft Model: SA.365C-3
Aircraft Registration: VH-HRM **Serial Number:**
Type of Operation: Miscellaneous Search and Rescue
Damage to Aircraft: Destroyed
Departure Point: Newcastle
Departure Time: 1840 ESuT
Destination: 34km NW Dungog NSW

Crew Details:

		Hours on	
<u>Role</u>	<u>Class of Licence</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Hours Total</u>
Pilot-In-Command	ATPL 1st Class	250.0	10800

Approved for Release: Thursday, July 8, 1993

The search and rescue helicopter was called out to a potential rescue and medical retrieval of a man who had fallen from a waterfall at Barrington Tops which is a mountainous/wilderness area. Due to extensive cloud cover, approaching last light and a lack of contact with ground personnel, the pilot-in-command elected to land near Barrington Guest House. 900 metres south east of the guest house was a paddock apparently suitable as a helipad.

While flying a right downwind leg at about 60 knots and 500 feet in very light drizzle, the pilot and crew/passengers searched for powerlines and other potential obstructions. Powerlines paralleling the intended landing direction were seen. One of the crewmen searched for wires by looking out through the only sliding door fitted, which was on the left side of the helicopter. A normal approach was flown. When the helicopter was about 20 knots and 25 feet above the ground, the crewman sitting in the left front seat suddenly detected a spurline running across the approach path. He called out a warning to the pilot but it was too late. The helicopter struck two wires. The pilot immediately lowered the collective in an attempt to land as soon as possible. The landing was heavy. The helicopter impacted the ground in a slightly nose down attitude while banked slightly to the left.

The wire strike was at the level of the rotating swashplate. Cyclic control was probably lost when the control rods above the swashplate were damaged by the wires.

The spurline was particularly difficult to see. Rising ground ahead of the wires, in the direction of landing, camouflaged the wires. The pole at the end of the spurline was somewhat hidden by trees and light drizzle reduced visibility.

A wire strike protection device was not fitted on the helicopter.

SIGNIFICANT FACTORS

The following factors were considered relevant to the development of the accident:

1. The powerline was particularly difficult to see because of its location, the surrounding terrain and foliage.
2. Visibility was reduced due to light drizzle.