

OA2008-07150 - Occurrence Details

Occurrence

Logged date	6/13/2021 12:53:55 AM
Status	Approved for release
Occurrence class	Accident
Highest injury	Fatal
Occurrence date	11/19/2008
Occurrence time	11:50 Cen. Australia Standard Time
Public summary	<p>On the morning of 19 November 2008, the pilot of a McDonnell Douglas 369D helicopter, registered VH-PLJ, and two lineworkers were conducting airborne joint-testing operations on an electricity transmission line between Mannum and Mobilong, South Australia. Joint testing involves closely approaching the transmission line to check joints in transmission wires. At about 1150 Central Daylight-saving Time, when about 13 km north of Murray Bridge, the helicopter's main rotor blades contacted a transmission line conductor. The pilot lost control and the helicopter impacted the ground. One lineworker was fatally injured, the other lineworker received minor injuries and the pilot received serious injuries. The helicopter was seriously damaged. The investigation found that the crew was not aware before the flight that there were transpositions (changes in the relative positions of individual wires) in the line and that they did not detect such a transposition during the approach for the joint test that led to the accident. Following the occurrence, the helicopter operator amended the guidance for conducting joint-testing and expanded training and supervision of new crews. The powerline owner reviewed the risk profile of its airborne operations and revised a number of hazard treatment options. The powerline maintenance provider made a number of operational changes and contracted an external auditor to examine its operation. All of the recommendations from that audit were adopted by the maintenance provider. In response to the failure of the recording lineworker's shoulder harness, the shoulder harness repair facility has upgraded relevant repair equipment and provided a replacement program for any incorrectly-stitched harness in the operator's helicopter fleet. In addition, the Civil Aviation Safety Authority took action to have a number of seat belt harnesses recalled and examined. No issues were found with any of the seat belts that were examined and they were able to be re-released without further rework.</p>
Property damage	No
Property damage details	
Worst accident outcome	Major accident
Defence effectiveness	Not effective
Risk rating	High (500)
ERC justification	
TSI reportable	Immediately reportable

Ground injuries	Fatal	Serious	Minor	Total
	0	0	0	0

Location

Location	Murray Bridge (ALA), 030° M 8Km
Latitude	-35.00930000
Longitude	139.25330000
State	SA
Country	Australia

Aircraft

Registration	VH-PLJ
Type	Helicopter
Manufacturer	MCDONNELL DOUGLAS HELICOPTER COMPANY
Model	369D
Engine type	Turboshaft
Engine manufacturer	ALLISON GAS TURBINES
Engine model	250-C20B
Number of engines	1
Landing gear type	Skid
Fuel type	Kerosene
Year of manufacture	1979
Amateur built	
Maximum takeoff weight (kg)	1360
ELT Type	
ELT Fitted	Unknown
ELT Activated	No

Airspace

Controlling agency	Other
ATS service type	Other
ATS position	Other
Airspace class	G
Airspace type	OCTA

Operation

Registration	VH-PLJ <small>Section 47E(d)</small>
Flight number	
Related runway	
Phase of flight	Manoeuvring/airwork
PIC status	Employee
Pilot flying role	Pilot in command
Departure aerodrome	Mannum sub-station, SA
Destination aerodrome	Mobilong sub-station, SA
Actual landing	4.5 NM NNE Murray Bridge SA
Aerodrome proximity	Off aerodrome < 10 km
Operation type	Aerial Work
Operation subtype	Survey / Photographic - (Aerial Work)
Activity group	General aviation / Recreational
Activity type	Aerial work
Activity subtype	Pipeline / powerline surveying
Flight rules	VFR
Flight conditions	VMC
Altitude type	AGL (above ground level - ft)
Altitude	Exactly
Exact altitude	33
Other information	

Occurrence category

Registration	VH-PLJ
Level 1	Operational Operational
Level 2	Terrain collisions Terrain collisions
Level 3	Wirestrike Collision with terrain

Damage level and injuries

Registration	VH-PLJ
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Injury level	Fatal	Serious	Minor	Total
Crew	1	1	1	3
Passengers				
Aircraft damage level	Substantial			
Post impact fire	No			
Damage description				

Weather and environment

Cloud cover	Broken (5-7 OKTAS)
Visibility (km)	10
Light conditions	Daylight
Wind direction	270
Average wind speed (kts)	5
Cloud base (ft)	5000
Visibility reduced by	None
Turbulence conditions	Nil
Icing conditions	Nil
Precipitation type	Nil
Precipitation intensity	Nil
QNH	
Outside temperature	
Light and variable (windspeed)	No
Maximum wind speed (gust)	
Dew point	
CAVOK	
Effective cloud ceiling	
Weather phenomena	

Safety factor

Level 1	
Level 2	
Level 3	