

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
198802346**

Hughes 269C

12 February 1988

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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: 198802346
Location: Canberra ACT
Date: 12 February 1988
Highest Injury Level: Nil
Injuries:

Occurrence Type: Accident

Time: 951

	Fatal	Serious	Minor	None
Crew	0	0	1	1
Ground	0	0	0	-
Passenger	0	0	0	1
Total	0	0	0	2

Aircraft Details: Hughes 269C
Registration: VH-HJD
Serial Number: 640317
Operation Type: Aerial Work
Damage Level: Substantial
Departure Point: Canberra ACT
Departure Time: 0946
Destination: Canberra ACT

Approved for Release: 11 March 1988

Circumstances:

The flight was to be a period of solo practice exercises following the completion of a Commercial Licence flight test a number of weeks earlier. The pilot conducted a number of circuits and landings, and on this circuit was carrying out a power termination autorotation landing from 800 feet above the ground. As he commenced levelling the helicopter from the flare, he felt a bump at the tail. He landed the helicopter and shut the engine down. An inspection revealed that the tail rotor had contacted the ground, severing the tail rotor blades. The resultant vibration and imbalance caused the tail boom to fracture and the horizontal stabiliser to become detached. No pre-existing defect was found with the helicopter which could have contributed to the occurrence. It was evident that the pilot had misjudged his height above the ground during the landing flare.