

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
197902815**

Aerospatiale SA365C-1

03 December 1979

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Investigations commenced on or before 30 June 2003, including the publication of reports as a result of those investigations, are authorised by the CEO of the Bureau in accordance with Part 2A of the Air Navigation Act 1920.

Investigations commenced after 1 July 2003, including the publication of reports as a result of those investigations, are authorised by the CEO of the Bureau in accordance with the Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003 (TSI Act). Reports released under the TSI Act are not admissible as evidence in any civil or criminal proceedings.

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: 197902815 **Occurrence Type:** Accident
Location: Hickey Creek (46 km NW of Sale) VIC
Date: 03 December 1979 **Time:** 1020
Highest Injury Level: Nil
Injuries:

	Fatal	Serious	Minor	None
Crew	0	0	2	2
Ground	0	0	0	-
Passenger	0	0	0	3
Total	0	0	0	5

Aircraft Details: Aerospatiale SA365C-1
Registration: VH-PVF
Serial Number:
Operation Type: Aerial Work (Police Observation)
Damage Level: Substantial
Departure Point: Hickey Creek VIC
Departure Time: 1000
Destination: Hickey Creek VIC

Approved for Release: April 23rd 1987

Circumstances:

During a Police search for an offender in scrub country, the helicopter was required to hover at about 100 feet over level ground in light wind conditions. After about 12 minutes in the hover with the co-pilot at the controls, it became necessary to re-position the aircraft slightly to the right and rear. To maintain adequate observation of the search area the pilot in command took over the controls and elected to back the aircraft into the new position. Whilst backing-up a slight descent developed. Power was increased but without effect. The pilot then applied full power and forward cyclic control in an effort to arrest the sink and fly away, but descent continued until the aircraft struck the ground heavily. The right maingear was broken and the fenestron shroud sustained damage. After the impact the aircraft bounced back into the air and the pilot maintained a low hover while the extent of the damage was assessed. He then flew the aircraft to the base camp and carried out a successful landing on fuel drums, which supported the right side of the aircraft. The initial slow descent during the back-up manoeuvre was probably the result of the pilot having just assumed control of the aircraft, coupled with a diversion of visual attention while moving towards the required position. The reason for the final, rapid descent could not be established. The aircraft manufacturer had no information relating to previous uncontrolled descents under the conditions which existed at the time, and therefore no procedures had been developed to counter the phenomenon.