

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
198903780**

Hiller UH12-E

31 May 1989

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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: 198903780 **Occurrence Type:** Accident
Location: Near Theebine (30 km N Gympie) QLD
Date: 31 May 1989 **Time:** 1300
Highest Injury Level: Nil
Injuries:

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

Aircraft Details: Hiller UH12-E
Registration: VH-KAU
Serial Number: 5089
Operation Type: Aerial Work
Damage Level: Substantial
Departure Point: Near Theebine QLD
Departure Time: 1300
Destination: Near Theebine QLD

Approved for Release: 31st August 1989

Circumstances:

A Distress Phase was declared by the Brisbane Senior Operations Controller when an Emergency Locator Beacon (ELB) signal was received by an overflying aircraft, in the Tiaro area, at 2242 hours EST on 31 May 1989. A search the following morning located VH-KAU. The pilot of VH-KAU stated that during a spray run, the engine failed completely when the helicopter was about 5 to 8 feet above ground level. During the subsequent autorotation onto the hillside the mainrotor contacted the tailboom. The pilot stated that he had subsequently drained the fuel system and found evidence of water contamination in the fuel. The engine was being operated on diesoline which was not a recommended fuel. The main rotor head showed evidence of a large pre-existing crack near the hub, and this item is subject to further investigation.

Significant Factors:

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

1. The pilot reported that the engine failed due to water contamination of the fuel.
2. Inadequate fuel quality control and fuel handling procedures.