

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
199000021**

Hughes 269 C

23 October 1990

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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: 199000021
Location: Green Vale' Barellan NSW
Date: 23 October 1990
Highest Injury Level: Fatal
Injuries:

Occurrence Type: Accident
Time: 730

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

Aircraft Details: Hughes 269 C
Registration: VH-KHO
Serial Number: 900956
Operation Type: Aerial Work
Damage Level: Destroyed
Departure Point: Green Vale' Barellan
Departure Time: N/A
Destination: Green Vale' Barellan

Approved for Release: 23rd July 1991

Circumstances:

The aircraft was carrying out a short familiarisation flight before beginning the day's powerline inspection program. On board were the pilot and the owner of the property being used as a temporary base for operations. The aircraft took off toward the east over a flat paddock, the pilot's intention being to turn north from a point near the centre of the paddock then to intercept an east-west powerline and to follow that line westwards. While still tracking east, at about 20 feet altitude, the aircraft struck and snapped a north-south powerline crossing the takeoff path. The aircraft then continued forward for about 60 metres before impacting the ground and coming to rest five metres beyond the impact point. An eyewitness to the accident stated that he was 'almost certain' that he had informed the pilot of the existence of the north-south powerline when the aircraft had first arrived at the property, seven days before the accident. The pilot stated that he had no prior knowledge of the line. The aircraft had taken off from the pad at least three times and had landed at the pad at least four times since first arrival. All prior movements had been to the west of the pad and the pilot had not been reminded about the line. Prior to takeoff on the day of the accident, the pilot briefed the passenger about the proposed profile of the flight and asked the passenger for any comments. The passenger agreed with the proposed profile but did not mention the north-south powerline. The pilot looked to the east to note any obstructions but did not see the line which was very difficult to see from the takeoff point. In addition, due to the relatively low position of the sun in the north-eastern sky, glare may have adversely affected his vision. Further, the flat, open terrain did not provide any visual cues to alert him to the requirement for obstruction clearance. However, the pilot did not closely inspect the takeoff path from the ground. Examination of the wreckage did not reveal any defects in the aircraft which may have contributed to the accident. The performance capability of the aircraft was such that the climb gradient required to clear the powerline could have been easily achieved.

Significant Factors:

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

1. The pilot did not closely inspect the proposed DEPARTURE path for obstructions prior to takeoff.
2. The line was very difficult to see from the takeoff point. Glare may have aggravated this problem.
3. The flat, open terrain, without obvious obstructions along the takeoff path, provided no cues alerting the pilot to the need for obstruction clearance.