Aviation Safety Investigation Report 198602331

Hughes 369 E

21 June 1986

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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: 198602331 **Occurrence Type:** Accident
Location: Charlottes Pass (6 km NE Mt Kosciusko) NSW
Date: 21 June 1986 **Time:** 1110 approx.
Highest Injury Level: Nil
Injuries:

	Fatal	Serious	Minor	None
Crew	0	0	1	1
Ground	0	0	0	-
Passenger	0	0	0	2
Total	**0**	**0**	**0**	**3**

Aircraft Details: Hughes 369 E
Registration: VH-JBE
Serial Number: 0148E
Operation Type: Aerial Work (Survey)
Damage Level: Substantial
Departure Point: Charlottes Pass NSW
Departure Time: N/A
Destination: Cooma NSW

Approved for Release: 22nd June 1987

Circumstances:

The helicopter was being operated in clear conditions, with a five knot South - Westerly breeze, and an outside air temperature of minus six degrees celsius. After landing on a snow covered ridge, the passengers advised that they would require only a short period of time to complete their work. While waiting, the pilot maintained sufficient power to prevent the helicopter sinking deeper into the snow than approximately 45 centimetres. On DEPARTURE, the helicopter lifted normally clear of the snow into the hover, then turned approximately 45 degrees to the left, to follow the ridge line instead of flying direct across the valley to the next destination. During take-off, slight sink was encountered. This was controlled by an increase in collective pitch, but almost immediately further sink occurred. The pilot again increased collective pitch and forward cyclic control expecting to accelerate through the sink. The skids contacted the snow surface, with the right hand skid digging in deeper, causing the helicopter to roll to the right. In response, left cyclic control and full collective were applied , but the helicopter continued rolling to the right, allowing the main rotor blades to contact the snow, which caused the helicopter to overturn. The prevailing conditions would appear to preclude the possibilty of power failure caused by snow ingested through the engine air intake. A full mechanical inspection was made of the helicopter and its engine, but no fault was detected. It is possible the aircraft was over-rotated, allowing the skid toes to contact the snow. The cause of this accident was not determined.