

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
199801119**

**Hiller Aviation
UH-12E**

07 March 1998

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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: 199801119 **Occurrence Type:** Accident
Location: 17km NW Gunnedah, Aerodrome
State: NSW **Inv Category:** 4
Date: Saturday 07 March 1998
Time: 0715 hours **Time Zone** ESuT
Highest Injury Level: Minor
Injuries:

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

Aircraft Manufacturer: Hiller Aviation
Aircraft Model: UH-12E
Aircraft Registration: VH-MJV **Serial Number:** 5124
Type of Operation: Commercial Aerial Agriculture/Baiting
Damage to Aircraft: Destroyed
Departure Point: Paddock 17km NW Gunnedah NSW
Departure Time: 0700 ESuT
Destination: Paddock 17km NW Gunnedah NSW

Crew Details:

Role	Class of Licence	Hours on Type	Hours Total
Pilot-In-Command	ATPL	250.0	2100

Approved for Release: Monday, July 6, 1998

The pilot of the Hiller 12E helicopter had been tasked with spraying insecticide on a paddock of soybean plants. The pilot familiarised himself with the property layout and obstacles before starting treatment of the area. The paddock to be sprayed was crossed at its mid point by powerlines running east-west. The southern boundary of the paddock was marked by a wire fence, a road and another set of powerlines.



The pilot reported commencing a spray run along the northern boundary but found that his GPS navigation system was not working. He landed on the western side of the paddock to re-enter data into the GPS system. On carrying out another run, the pilot found the system was still not operating, so he moved the helicopter away from the paddock to the south. He then elected to return to the paddock by flying over the powerlines. The pilot reported that at this time, he was mentally occupied with the problem with the GPS and forgot about the powerlines at the southern edge of the paddock. The helicopter spray gear contacted the powerlines, causing the helicopter to pitch nose down and contact the ground. The helicopter came to rest inverted and the pilot climbed out of the wreckage, receiving only minor injuries. The helicopter did not catch fire.

A significant factor in this accident was the preoccupation of the pilot with the GPS navigation equipment at a time when he was flying close to obstacles.

