

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
199704244**

**Bell Helicopter Co
412**

13 December 1997

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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 Executive Director of the Bureau in accordance with Part 2A of the Air Navigation Act 1920.

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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: 199704244 **Occurrence Type:** Accident
Location: Lake Munmorah
State: NSW **Inv Category:** 4
Date: Saturday 13 December 1997
Time: 1607 hours **Time Zone** ESuT
Highest Injury Level: Serious
Injuries:

	Fatal	Serious	Minor	None	Total
Crew	0	1	0	3	4
Ground	0	0	0	0	0
Passenger	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	1	0	3	4

Aircraft Manufacturer: Bell Helicopter Co
Aircraft Model: 412
Aircraft Registration: VH-HRS **Serial Number:** 33118
Type of Operation: Miscellaneous Search and Rescue
Damage to Aircraft: Nil
Departure Point: Newcastle NSW
Departure Time: 1550 ESuT
Destination: Lake Munmorah NSW

Approved for Release: Friday, April 3, 1998

The aircraft had been tasked by police to provide assistance to two people in difficulty in Lake Munmorah. With the aircraft in the hover, the crewman stepped into the water with the intention of assisting the swimmers. As the water was shallow, the crewman's foot hit the bottom of the lake hard, breaking his ankle. People from the shore rescued the swimmers and the crewman in the water. The crewman was later flown to hospital for medical treatment.

The crew's actions were in accordance with their training and the company's operations manual. However, these procedures contain a latent failure in that they are not safe in shallow water or where there may be submerged objects. Since this occurrence, procedures have been changed so that crewman can only jump from the aircraft when it is out to sea. A crewman who needs to enter the water in a bay, lake or river has to be winched into the water. The operations manual has been amended to avoid a repeat of this occurrence. No further safety action is required.