

**Aviation Safety Investigation Report
199500835**

**Kawasaki Heavy Industries
Kawasaki KH4**

21 March 1995

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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.

The Bureau did not conduct an on scene investigation of this occurrence. The information presented below was obtained from information supplied to the Bureau.

Occurrence Number: 199500835 **Occurrence Type:** Accident
Location: Palmerston
State: NT **Inv Category:** 4
Date: Tuesday 21 March 1995
Time: 1812 hours **Time Zone** CST
Highest Injury Level: None

Aircraft Manufacturer: Kawasaki Heavy Industries
Aircraft Model: 47G3B-KH4
Aircraft Registration: VH-LFK **Serial Number:** 2133
Type of Operation: Charter Passenger
Damage to Aircraft: Substantial
Departure Point: Jabiru NT
Departure Time:
Destination: Darwin NT

Crew Details:

| Role | Class of Licence | Hours on Type | Hours Total |
|------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Pilot-In-Command | Commercial | 200.0 | 2000 |

Approved for Release: Wednesday, February 21, 1996

The pilot had flown the helicopter from Darwin to Jabiru, carried out some local flying at Jabiru and then returned to Darwin on the day of the accident. As the helicopter was approaching Darwin the pilot was instructed by an air traffic controller to hold position in the Palmerston area and await further clearance. Shortly afterwards the engine stopped and the pilot was forced to complete an autorotational landing. The pilot misjudged the approach and the aircraft landed heavily.

The pilot did not complete a flight plan prior to the flight and no evidence was found to indicate she used any form of formal fuel management to ensure that fuel available met the required reserves.

The aircrafts total fuel capacity of 200 L provided for an endurance of approximately 2.6 hours at a normal fuel consumption rate of 75 L/hour. The flight to Jabiru took 2.5 hours. A total of 194 L of fuel was required to fill the tanks following this flight. The tanks were also refilled following the local flying. Although almost all the fuel had been exhausted on the flight to Jabiru the pilot departed for the 2.5 hour flight to Darwin without having made any alternative fuel arrangements. The fact that the aircraft had almost run out of fuel on the flight to Jabiru did not register.

When the pilot was instructed to hold position in the Palmerston area and await a further clearance she advised the controller that the aircraft was low on fuel but she did not communicate any urgency about the situation. Ten minutes later, whilst still in a holding pattern, the engine stopped as a result of fuel exhaustion. The helicopter had been airborne for 2.6 hours when the engine stopped.

The pilots actions indicate she was never sufficiently aware of the aircraft's fuel situation. The lack of planning and the failure to use a formal management procedure probably exacerbated the situation.

