

 National Transportation Safety Board PRELIMINARY REPORT AVIATION		NTSB ID: ERA14FA396		Most Critical Injury: Fatal		
		Occurrence Date: 08/19/2014		Investigated By: NTSB		
		Occurrence Type: Accident				
Location/Time						
Nearest City/Place		State	Zip Code	Local Time	Time Zone	
Northport		AL	35475	1100	CDT	
Aircraft Information						
Registration Number		Aircraft Manufacturer		Model/Series Number		
N444RS		MCDONNELL DOUGLAS HELICOPTER		369E		
Type of Aircraft: Helicopter			Amateur Built Aircraft? No			
Injury Summary:		Fatal	2	Serious	Minor	None
Revenue Sightseeing Flight: No			Air Medical Transport Flight: No			
Narrative						
Brief narrative statement of facts, conditions and circumstances pertinent to the accident/incident:						
<p>*** Note: NTSB investigators either traveled in support of this investigation or conducted a significant amount of investigative work without any travel, and used data obtained from various sources to prepare this aircraft accident report. ***</p> <p>On August 19, 2014, about 1100 central daylight time, a McDonnell Douglas 369E, N444RS, was substantially damaged when it impacted a utility wire and terrain while maneuvering near Northport, Alabama. The commercial pilot and the passenger were fatally injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and a company flight plan was filed for the local flight, which originated from Tuscaloosa Regional Airport (TCL), Tuscaloosa, Alabama, about 1030. The aerial observation flight was conducted under the provisions of 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91.</p> <p>According to the operator, on the morning of the accident flight, the pilot was requested to relocate the helicopter from Mobile, Alabama, to Tuscaloosa. Once in Tuscaloosa, the pilot fueled the helicopter and picked up the passenger/observer before departing on the accident flight. The purpose of the flight was to inspect a span of high-tension power lines for damage from a storm that had passed through the area the previous night.</p> <p>About 1025, the pilot submitted a company flight plan via email, and according to satellite tracking data, departed TCL about 1030. The helicopter's location, altitude, groundspeed, and direction of travel were subsequently reported to the operator every 5 minutes, as it initially flew east, intercepted the powerline span to be inspected, and then proceeded north along the span. The final reported position was recorded at 1100, at a GPS altitude of 457 feet, a groundspeed of 32 knots, and a track of 27 degrees true. At that time, the helicopter was positioned over the western edge of the easement through which the powerlines ran.</p> <p>About 1130, the power company contacted the operator and reported an additional fault with the transmission lines the accident helicopter was tasked with inspecting, and believed that the fault may be associated with the helicopter. The operator subsequently began a search for the helicopter and provided its last known position to local law enforcement. The accident site was located by air about 1/4-mile northeast of helicopter's last reported position.</p> <p>The accident site was located along the eastern edge of the powerline easement, which was oriented roughly north-south and in a shallow valley between two transmission towers. A shield wire that spanned between the two towers on their eastern side was severed about mid-way between the two towers. The remaining fiber optic cable and three power transmission phase cables appeared undamaged. The helicopter came to rest inverted, within a creek bed, just outside and east of the easement, in a forested area.</p>						
PRELIMINARY INFORMATION - SUBJECT TO CHANGE						

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Narrative (Continued)

The aft portion of the tailboom and the main rotor head separated from the fuselage, and came to rest about 80 and 90 feet from the fuselage, respectively.
Updated on Sep 4 2014 12:43PM

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Other Aircraft Involved		
Registration Number	Aircraft Manufacturer	Model/Series Number

Accident Information	
Aircraft Damage: Substantial	Accident Occurred During: Maneuvering-low-alt flying

Crew	Name	Certificate No.	Injury
Pilot	On File	On File	Fatal
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

Operator Information		
Name ROTORWORKS LLC	Operator Designator Code R96A	Doing Business As

Street Address 165 COMMODORE PATH	City HIRAM	State GA	Zip Code 301412873
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-Type of Certificate(s) Held:	On-demand Air Taxi
Air Carrier Operating Certificate(s):	

Operating Certificate:	Operator Certificate:
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Regulation Flight Conducted Under: Part 91: General Aviation
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Type of Flight Operations Conducted: Aerial Observation

Flight Plan/Itinerary			
Type of Flight Plan Filed: Company VFR			

Last Departure Point	State	Airport Identifier
Tuscaloosa	AL	TCL
Destination	State	Airport Identifier
Local Flight	AL	TCL

Weather Information				
Investigator's Source: Weather Observation Facility	Facility ID: KTCL	Observation Time (Local): 1553		
Sky/Lowest Cloud Condition: Clear		Ft. AGL		
Lowest Ceiling: None	Ft. AGL	Visibility: 10	SM	Altimeter: 29.97 "Hg

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Weather Information (Continued from page 2)

Temperature: 30 °C	Dew Point: 22 °C	Wind Direction: 260	
Wind Speed: 5 Kts.	Gusts: Kts.	Weather Conditions at Accident Site: Visual Conditions	

Administration Data

Notification From FAA Southern ROC	Date
FAA District Office/Coordinator FAA/FSDO Clay Perkins	Investigator-In-Charge (IIC) Dennis Diaz