

National Transportation Safety Board
Washington, DC 20594

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Brief of Accident

Adopted 03/02/2004

FTW03LA101		02/22/2003		High Island 443, GM		Aircraft Reg No. N740PH		Time (Local): 09:33 CST					
File No. 14913													
Make/Model: Bell / 407						Fatal		Serious		Minor/None			
Engine Make/Model: Rolls-royce / 250-C47B						Crew		0		0		1	
Aircraft Damage: Minor						Pass		0		0		0	
Number of Engines: 1						Other		1		0		0	
Operating Certificate(s): On-demand Air Taxi													
Name of Carrier: Petroleum Helicopters, Inc.													
Type of Flight Operation: Non-scheduled; Domestic; Passenger Only													
Reg. Flight Conducted Under: Part 135: Air Taxi & Commuter													
Last Depart. Point: High Island 442, GM								Condition of Light: Day					
Destination: Same as Accident/Incident Location								Weather Info Src: Weather Observation Facility					
Airport Proximity: Off Airport/Airstrip								Basic Weather: Visual Conditions					
								Lowest Ceiling: None					
								Visibility: 15.00 SM					
								Wind Dir/Speed: 320 / 033 Kts					
								Temperature (°C): 14					
								Precip/Obscuration:					
Pilot-in-Command		Age: 41						Flight Time (Hours)					
Certificate(s)/Rating(s)								Total All Aircraft: 5071					
Airline Transport; Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land; Helicopter								Last 90 Days: 49					
Instrument Ratings								Total Make/Model: 13					
Airplane; Helicopter								Total Instrument Time: UnK/Nr					

During hot refueling operation on an offshore platform, a passenger, who was assisting in the refueling, was struck by the helicopter's main rotor blades. Due to the location of the platform stairwell, the pilot elected to position the helicopter on the platform with a quartering headwind from the right. The pilot "confirmed the [aircraft] was stable by pedal and control inputs prior to allowing [passengers] exit to begin fueling." Both passengers exited the helicopter and assisted in the refueling. During the refueling operation with the engine at ground idle, the helicopter began to "feel light", and slide to the left. The helicopter continued to the left and came to a stop approximately 1 to 2 feet from the edge of the platform. The pilot shut down the helicopter and noticed both passengers lying on the platform. The surviving passenger reported, "[a] wind gust took aircraft [and] it began to slide. [He] unhooked [the] ground cable, pulled hose out, ran from [the] aircraft, laid on deck, [the other passenger] was by the pump controller (fuel pit), proceeded to get out of the way and was struck by the main rotor." Another offshore platform, located approximately 6 miles from the accident site, reported the wind from 320 degrees at 33 knots.

Brief of Accident (Continued)

FTW03LA101
File No. 14913 02/22/2003 High Island 443, GM Aircraft Reg No. N740PH Time (Local): 09:33 CST

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - ON GROUND/WATER
Phase of Operation: STANDING - IDLING ROTORS

Findings

1. (C) DIRECTIONAL CONTROL - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: PROPELLER/ROTOR CONTACT TO PERSON
Phase of Operation: STANDING - IDLING ROTORS

Findings

2. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - HIGH WIND
3. REFUELING - PERFORMED - PASSENGER
4. PROPELLER/JET BLAST ENCOUNTER - INADVERTENT - PASSENGER

Findings Legend: (C) = Cause, (F) = Factor

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident as follows.

The pilot's failure to maintain directional control of the helicopter during the hot refueling operation which resulted in the main rotor blades striking the passenger. A contributing factor was the high wind conditions.