



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Preliminary Report

Location:	HOUSTON, TX	Accident Number:	CEN20LA167
Date & Time:	05/02/2020, 0203 CDT	Registration:	N8375F
Aircraft:	MD HELICOPTER 369	Injuries:	1 Fatal, 1 Serious
Flight Conducted Under:	Public Aircraft		

On May 2, 2020, about 0203 central daylight time, a model 369E MD Helicopter, N8375F, was destroyed when it was involved in an accident near Houston, Texas. The pilot sustained serious injuries and the other flight crewmember sustained fatal injuries. The helicopter was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91 public aircraft flight.

According to initial information from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), a Houston Police Department helicopter was on a local flight near the George Bush Intercontinental/Houston Airport (IAH), near Houston, Texas, and its pilot had contacted air traffic control. The pilot was using flight following while he was conducting a search flight for a person near a bayou. A Department of Public Safety (DPS) helicopter contacted the controller, asked for clearance into the airspace near IAH, and was given that clearance. The DPS helicopter crewmember asked if the controller was still in contact with the police helicopter. The controller advised that radar contact was lost with the police helicopter. The DPS helicopter crewmember advised that there was an indication that the helicopter had impacted terrain.

An FAA inspector examined the wreckage site and documented it. The helicopter had impacted an unoccupied building and terrain. The wreckage was recovered and retained for further detailed examination. The helicopter was equipped with an augmented reality mapping system. The data recording device from that mapping system has been retained to see if it contains information pertinent to the accident flight.

The pilot held an FAA commercial pilot certificate and a second-class medical certificate.

At 0153, the recorded wind at IAH was 170° at 4 kts and visibility was 10 statute miles.

According to United States Naval Observatory indications, the Moon had set, it was more than 30° below the horizon, and it provided no illumination at the time of the accident.

According to a video taken by a witness, the helicopter rotated while in the air and descended. The conditions present in the video were consistent with the observatory indications.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	MD HELICOPTER	Registration:	N8375F
Model/Series:	369 E	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Amateur Built:	No		
Operator:	City Of Houston	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Night
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KIAH, 105 ft msl	Observation Time:	0153 CDT
Distance from Accident Site:	3 Nautical Miles	Temperature/Dew Point:	20° C / 16° C
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 2500 ft agl	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	4 knots / , 170°
Lowest Ceiling:		Visibility:	10 Miles
Altimeter Setting:	30.03 inches Hg	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Departure Point:	Houston, TX (HOU)	Destination:	Houston, TX (HOU)

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal, 1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Fatal, 1 Serious	Latitude, Longitude:	29.947222, -95.395833 (est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Edward F Malinowski
Additional Participating Persons:	Daniel Prince; Federal Aviation Administration; Houston, TX Joan Gregoire; MD Helicopters Inc; Mesa, AZ Nicholas P Shepler; Rolls Royce; Indianapolis, IN John J Hobby; Boeing Helicopter; Mesa, AZ
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.