



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Ceiba, Puerto Rico	Accident Number:	ERA24LA172
Date & Time:	April 9, 2024, 09:45 Local	Registration:	N5841Z
Aircraft:	MD HELICOPTERS INC 369FF	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)	Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Instructional		

Analysis

The accident pilot was new to the company, and he and the chief pilot were practicing quick stop maneuvers in the helicopter. The pilots reported that while performing a quick stop maneuver over a taxiway, they heard a noise before the nose of the helicopter began turning right and the skids touched down. Postaccident examination of the helicopter by a Federal Aviation Administration inspector revealed that its horizontal stabilizer was substantially damaged. Photographs of the horizontal stabilizer and tail rotor displayed signatures consistent with both contacting the ground during the quick stop maneuver. The pilots reported that there were no preaccident mechanical malfunctions or failures of the helicopter that would have precluded normal operation.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

The pilots' failure to ensure adequate clearance from the taxiway while performing a quick stop maneuver.

Findings

Aircraft	Altitude - Not attained/maintained
Personnel issues	Aircraft control - Pilot

Factual Information

History of Flight

Maneuvering-hover	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT) (Defining event)
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Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial; Military; Private	Age:	31, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	Unknown
Instrument Rating(s):	Helicopter	Second Pilot Present:	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	March 5, 2024
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	September 29, 2022
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 1780 hours (Total, all aircraft), 4.5 hours (Total, this make and model), 1740 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 94.9 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 36.9 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 0.7 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial; Private	Age:	51, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	Unknown
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane; Helicopter	Second Pilot Present:	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 2 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	March 28, 2024
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	May 12, 2023
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 6500 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1000 hours (Total, this make and model), 4000 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 80 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 15 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	MD HELICOPTERS INC	Registration:	N5841Z
Model/Series:	369FF	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:	1999	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	0135FF
Landing Gear Type:	None; High skid	Seats:	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	March 26, 2024 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	3100 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	55.8 Hrs	Engines:	2
Airframe Total Time:	5562.9 Hrs as of last inspection	Engine Manufacturer:	
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	
Registered Owner:	PUERTO RICO ELECTRIC POWER AUTHORITY	Rated Power:	
Operator:	Luma Energy Servco, LLC	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	Rotorcraft external load (133)
Operator Does Business As:	LUMA	Operator Designator Code:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	TJNR,38 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	0 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	09:53 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	355°
Lowest Cloud Condition:		Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 2800 ft AGL	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	10 knots / 16 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	None / None
Wind Direction:	60°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	30.07 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	26°C / 21°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	San Juan, PR (TJSJ)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Ceiba, PR (TJRU)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	08:45 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	JOSE APONTE DE LA TORRE RVR	Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:	38 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:		IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	2 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	18.25144,-65.640696(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Young, Joshua
Additional Participating Persons:	Josue Marrero-Berrios; FAA/FSDO; San Juan , PR
Original Publish Date:	May 9, 2024
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 4
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=194063

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person” (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available [here](#).