



# National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

---

<b>Location:</b>	Meadview, AZ	<b>Accident Number:</b>	LAX01MA272
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	08/10/2001, 1428 MST	<b>Registration:</b>	N169PA
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Eurocopter AS350-B2	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Destroyed
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	6 Fatal, 1 Serious
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 135: Air Taxi & Commuter - Non-scheduled - Sightseeing		

---

## Analysis

The Board's full report is available at <http://www.nts.gov/publicn/2004/AAB0402.pdf>

On August 10, 2001, about 1428 mountain standard time, a Eurocopter AS350-B2 helicopter, N169PA, operating as Papillon 34, collided with terrain during an uncontrolled descent about 4 miles east of Meadview, Arizona. The helicopter was operated by Papillon Airways, Inc., as an air tour flight under Code of Federal Regulations 14 (CFR) Part 135. The helicopter was destroyed by impact forces and a postcrash fire. The pilot and five passengers were killed, and the remaining passenger sustained serious injuries. The flight originated from the company terminal at the McCarran International Airport (LAS), Las Vegas, Nevada, about 1245 as a tour of the west Grand Canyon area with a planned stop at a landing site in Quartermaster Canyon. The helicopter departed the landing site about 1400 and stopped at a company fueling facility at the Grand Canyon West Airport (GCW). The helicopter departed the fueling facility at 1420 and was en route to LAS when the accident occurred. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and a visual flight rules flight plan was filed.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's loss of control of the helicopter for undetermined reasons.

## Findings

---

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT  
Phase of Operation: MANEUVERING

### Findings

1. (C) REASON FOR OCCURRENCE UNDETERMINED
2. WEATHER CONDITION - HIGH DENSITY ALTITUDE

-----

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER  
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

### Findings

3. TERRAIN CONDITION - MOUNTAINOUS/HILLY

## Factual Information

The Board's full report is available at <http://www.nts.gov/publicn/2004/AAB0402.pdf>

On August 10, 2001, about 1428 mountain standard time, a Eurocopter AS350-B2 helicopter, N169PA, operating as Papillon 34, collided with terrain during an uncontrolled descent about 4 miles east of Meadview, Arizona. The helicopter was operated by Papillon Airways, Inc., as an air tour flight under Code of Federal Regulations 14 (CFR) Part 135. The helicopter was destroyed by impact forces and a postcrash fire. The pilot and five passengers were killed, and the remaining passenger sustained serious injuries. The flight originated from the company terminal at the McCarran International Airport (LAS), Las Vegas, Nevada, about 1245 as a tour of the west Grand Canyon area with a planned stop at a landing site in Quartermaster Canyon. The helicopter departed the landing site about 1400 and stopped at a company fueling facility at the Grand Canyon West Airport (GCW). The helicopter departed the fueling facility at 1420 and was en route to LAS when the accident occurred. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and a visual flight rules flight plan was filed.

### Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Flight Instructor; Commercial	<b>Age:</b>	27, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Right
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	Helicopter	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	Seatbelt, Shoulder harness
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	Helicopter	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	Helicopter	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	Yes
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 2 Valid Medical--no waivers/lim.	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	07/03/2001
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	Yes	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	02/21/2001
<b>Flight Time:</b>	2794 hours (Total, all aircraft), 699 hours (Total, this make and model), 2600 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 224 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 86 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 10 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Manufacturer:</b>	Eurocopter	<b>Registration:</b>	N169PA
<b>Model/Series:</b>	AS350-B2	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Helicopter
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	No
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	2477
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Skid	<b>Seats:</b>	7
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	08/02/2001, Annual	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	4961 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>	37 Hours	<b>Engines:</b>	1 Turbo Shaft
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	1356 Hours at time of accident	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	Turbomeca
<b>ELT:</b>	Installed, not activated	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	Arriel 1D1
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	Zuni LLC	<b>Rated Power:</b>	625 hp
<b>Operator:</b>	Papillon Grand Canyon Helicopters	<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	On-demand Air Taxi (135)
<b>Operator Does Business As:</b>		<b>Operator Designator Code:</b>	PG9A

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual Conditions	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	KLAS, 2181 ft msl	<b>Observation Time:</b>	2156 UTC
<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	66 Nautical Miles	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	265°
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Few / 11000 ft agl	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	36° C / 17° C
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	None	<b>Visibility:</b>	10 Miles
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:</b>	Calm	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	29.93 inches Hg	<b>Visibility (RVV):</b>	
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	Grand Canyon W, AZ (1G4)	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	VFR
<b>Destination:</b>	Las Vegas, NV (LAS)	<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>	1425 MST	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class E

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 Fatal	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Destroyed
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>	5 Fatal, 1 Serious	<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	On-Ground
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	6 Fatal, 1 Serious	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	35.988611, -113.983333

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	JEFF RICH	<b>Adopted Date:</b>	06/03/2004
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	Eric West; Federal Aviation Administration, AAI-100; Washington, DC Ken Arnold; American Eurocopter Corporation; Grand Prairie, TX Archie Whitten; Turbomeca Engine Corporation; Grand Prairie, TX Rick Carrick; Papillon Grand Canyon Helicopters; Las Vegas, NV		
<b>Publish Date:</b>	06/22/2012		
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	NTSB accident and incident dockets serve as permanent archival information for the NTSB's investigations. Dockets released prior to June 1, 2009 are publicly available from the NTSB's Record Management Division at <a href="mailto:pubinq@ntsb.gov">pubinq@ntsb.gov</a> , or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at <a href="http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/">http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/</a> .		

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), established in 1967, is an independent federal agency mandated by Congress through the Independent Safety Board Act of 1974 to investigate transportation accidents, determine the probable causes of the accidents, issue safety recommendations, study transportation safety issues, and evaluate the safety effectiveness of government agencies involved in transportation. The NTSB makes public its actions and decisions through accident reports, safety studies, special investigation reports, safety recommendations, and statistical reviews.

The Independent Safety Board Act, as codified at 49 U.S.C. Section 1154(b), precludes the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an incident or accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report.