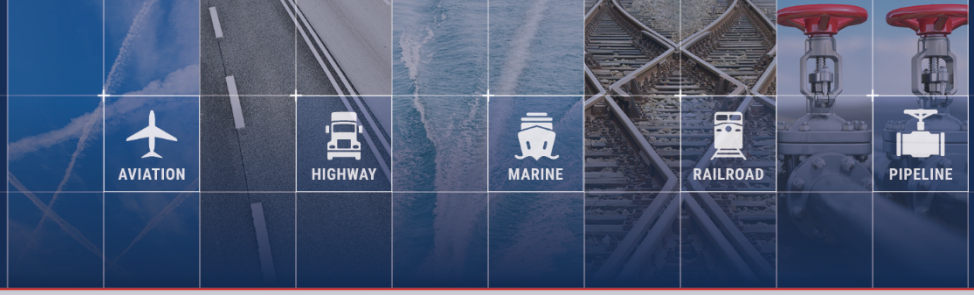

Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Denison, Iowa	**Accident Number:**	CEN23LA342
Date & Time:	July 30, 2023, 08:18 Local	**Registration:**	N231RL
Aircraft:	Bell 206B	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Defining Event:	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)	**Injuries:**	1 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 137: Agricultural		

Analysis

The pilot reported to his wife that while conducting an aerial application flight, he became distracted in the cockpit and failed to see and avoid wires that were spanning the field. The helicopter subsequently impacted the wires and then terrain, which resulted in substantial damage to the fuselage. The pilot was hospitalized but succumbed to his injuries 18 days after the accident.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

The pilot's inflight distraction, which resulted in his failure to see and avoid wires.

Findings

Environmental issues	Wire - Effect on equipment
Personnel issues	Task monitoring/vigilance - Pilot

Factual Information

History of Flight

Maneuvering-low-alt flying	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT) (Defining event)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	**Age:**	79,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	**Seat Occupied:**	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	**Restraint Used:**	
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane	**Second Pilot Present:**	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	**Toxicology Performed:**	
Medical Certification:	Class 2 Waiver time limited special	**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	June 1, 2023
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	
Flight Time:	(Estimated)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Bell	**Registration:**	N231RL
Model/Series:	206B	**Aircraft Category:**	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:	1974	**Amateur Built:**	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Restricted (Special)	**Serial Number:**	1324
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	**Seats:**	5
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Unknown	**Certified Max Gross Wt.:**	
Time Since Last Inspection:		**Engines:**	1 Turbo shaft
Airframe Total Time:		**Engine Manufacturer:**	Rolls-Royce
ELT:		**Engine Model/Series:**	250-C20B
Registered Owner:	NOR WES INC	**Rated Power:**	
Operator:	NOR WES INC	**Operating Certificate(s) Held:**	Agricultural aircraft (137)

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	**Condition of Light:**	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KDNS,1276 ft msl	**Distance from Accident Site:**	4 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	08:15 Local	**Direction from Accident Site:**	227°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	**Visibility**	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	**Visibility (RVR):**	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	5 knots /	**Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:**	/
Wind Direction:	80°	**Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:**	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.19 inches Hg	**Temperature/Dew Point:**	20°C / 20°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:		**Type of Flight Plan Filed:**	
Destination:		**Type of Clearance:**	None
Departure Time:		**Type of Airspace:**	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		**Aircraft Fire:**	None
Ground Injuries:		**Aircraft Explosion:**	None
Total Injuries:	1 Fatal	**Latitude, Longitude:**	42.034436,-95.310324(est)

Preventing Similar Accidents

Preventing Obstacle Collisions in Agricultural Operations (SA-035)

The Problem

Accidents involving collisions with obstacles, including poles, wires, guy wires, meteorological evaluation towers (MET), or trees, are among the most common types of agricultural aircraft accidents. Some collisions involved obstacles that the pilots did not see (even during survey flights) but others involved obstacles that were known to the pilot and/or had characteristics that would make them visibly conspicuous.

What can you do?

- Maintain a quick-reference document (paper or electronic) at the operations base that contains field maps, charts, photographs, and details of all known obstacles.Frequently review current aeronautical charts for information about obstacles.
- Before you leave the ground, spend time becoming familiar with all available information about the target field and programming navigation equipment. Such preflight action can help reduce the potential for confusion or distraction in flight.
- Conduct aerial surveys of the target field but do not rely solely on an aerial survey to identify potential obstacles.
- Conduct regular ground surveys of fields. Some towers can be erected in hours, and obstacles can change since you last worked that field.
- When possible, use ground crews. They may be in a better position to see certain obstacles and help you ensure that your aircraft remains clear of them.
- Watch for shadows and irregularities in growth patterns to help identify obstacles.
- Speak with farmers and land owners to raise awareness about obstacle hazards.
- Use GPS and other technology to maintain awareness of obstacle locations.
- Be aware that workload, fatigue, sun glare, and distractions in the cockpit can adversely affect your ability to see, avoid, or remember obstacles.
- Understand the performance limitations and requirements for your aircraft, particularly when operating with heavier loads and at higher density altitudes.
- The National Agricultural Aviation Association's Professional Aerial Applicators' Support System reminds pilots that, when ferrying an aircraft or transitioning between sites, flying above 500 feet reduces obstacle collision risks: "Ferry Above Five and Stay Alive."

See https://www.ntsb.gov/Advocacy/safety-alerts/Documents/SA-035.pdf for additional resources.

The NTSB presents this information to prevent recurrence of similar accidents. Note that this should not be considered guidance from the regulator, nor does this supersede existing FAA Regulations (FARs).

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Williams, David
Additional Participating Persons:	Jason Glass; FAA; Des Moines, IA
Original Publish Date:	August 31, 2023
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=192774