



Aviation Investigation Preliminary Report

Location:	Charlotte, NC	Accident Number:	ERA23FA070
Date & Time:	November 22, 2022, 11:57 Local	Registration:	N7094J
Aircraft:	ROBINSON HELICOPTER R44	Injuries:	2 Fatal
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Aerial observation		

On November 22, 2022, at 1157 eastern standard time, a Robinson Helicopter R44, N7094J, was destroyed when it was involved in an accident at Charlotte, North Carolina. The commercial pilot and one passenger were fatally injured. The helicopter was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91 aerial observation flight.

The purpose of the flight was to provide training for the staff meteorologist over a simulated news scene. Radar, Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B) data, and surveillance video revealed that the helicopter departed from the WBTV Heliport at 1150 and proceeded southbound for about 5 minutes until over Interstate (I) 77. The pilot then performed three left 360° turns. During the third turn, the helicopter entered a rapid descent and impacted a grassy area adjacent to the southbound lanes of I-77. The pilot was in contact with Charlotte (CLT) air traffic control tower at the time; however, a review of the communication recordings did not reveal any calls of distress.

The helicopter came to rest about 20 ft from the point of initial impact, and oriented on a heading of 015°. There was no fire. Portions of the landing gear were found within the initial impact crater. All the primary structural components and rotor blades were located within the confines of the main wreckage.

The wreckage was retained for further examination.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	ROBINSON HELICOPTER	Registration:	N7094J
Model/Series:	R44	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Amateur Built:			
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Designator Code:			

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	VMC	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KCLT, 730 ft msl	Observation Time:	16:52 Local
Distance from Accident Site:	5 Nautical Miles	Temperature/Dew Point:	14°C / -4°C
Lowest Cloud Condition:		Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	3 knots / , 340°
Lowest Ceiling:	Broken / 13000 ft AGL	Visibility:	10 miles
Altimeter Setting:	30.38 inches Hg	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	IFR
Departure Point:	Charlotte, NC (NC90)	Destination:	Charlotte, NC

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Fatal	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Fatal	Latitude, Longitude:	35.15407,-80.89333 (est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Hicks, Ralph
Additional Participating Persons:	Robert Reynolds; FAA/FSDO; Charlotte, NC James Childers; Lycoming Engines; Williamsport, PA Thom Webster; Robinson Helicopter; Torrance, CA James Keating; Total Traffic & Weather Network; Lawrenceville, GA
Note:	