



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Eagle, Colorado	Accident Number:	CEN25LA334
Date & Time:	August 22, 2025, 16:15 Local	Registration:	N171PL
Aircraft:	KAMAN AEROSPACE CORP K-1200	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Loss of control in flight	Injuries:	1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 133: Rotorcraft ext. load		

Analysis

The pilot stated that during a rotorcraft external load operation for firefighting, he was refilling the helicopter bucket at a lake. He stated that there had been wind gusts throughout the day and a right quartering tailwind of approximately 15 kts was present when he was refilling the bucket. He said that when another helicopter flew by his helicopter about 50-100 yds right and 150 ft above his position, he felt a push to the left. He pulled back on the cyclic control, but he could not recover the helicopter, which continued pitching to the left. The helicopter descended into the lake and sustained substantial to the main rotor blades. The pilot stated there was no mechanical malfunction/failure 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 pilot's failure to maintain helicopter control which resulted in an uncontrolled descent and impact with terrain.

Findings

Personnel issues	Aircraft control - Pilot
Aircraft	Lateral/bank control - Not attained/maintained

Factual Information

History of Flight

Maneuvering-hover	Loss of control in flight (Defining event)
Uncontrolled descent	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	59,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land; Multi-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Single
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	Restraint Used:	5-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Airplane; Helicopter	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 2 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	January 3, 2025
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	January 15, 2025
Flight Time:	26091 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1445 hours (Total, this make and model), 58 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 23 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 6 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	KAMAN AEROSPACE CORP	Registration:	N171PL
Model/Series:	K-1200	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:	2018	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	A94-0047
Landing Gear Type:	Tricycle; Skid	Seats:	1
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	July 28, 2025 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	6400 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Turbo shaft
Airframe Total Time:	1324.1 Hrs as of last inspection	Engine Manufacturer:	Honeywell Aerospace
ELT:	C126 installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	T5317A-1
Registered Owner:	PRECISION LIFT LLC	Rated Power:	1500 Horsepower
Operator:	Columbia Basin Helicopter	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	Rotorcraft external load (133)
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	C6HL

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	EGE, 6547 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	13 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	15:56 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	145°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	8 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	None / None
Wind Direction:	280°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	30.25 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	31°C / 6°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Eagle, CO	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Eagle, CO	Type of Clearance:	Special VFR
Departure Time:		Type of Airspace:	Restricted area

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:		Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	39.65526,-106.829(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Gallo, Mitchell
Additional Participating Persons:	Felix Mendoza; Federal Aviation Administration, Denver FSDO; Denver, CO
Original Publish Date:	October 17, 2025
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 4
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=200841

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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](#).