



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Washington Office

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P.O. Box 96090  
Washington, DC 20090-6090

File Code: 6730

Date: July 28, 2007

Route To: 6730

Subject: Expanded (72-hour) Briefing, Payette NF, East Zone Complex, Loon Fire,  
Accident, July 25, 2007

To: Hank Kashdan, DASHO

**THIS INFORMATION IS PRELIMINARY AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

Preliminary factual findings: While flying a water bucket mission supporting the Loon Fire, a Bell 214ST helicopter (N724HT) crashed on approach to a dip site. The pilot and a mechanic were on board at the time of the crash and exited upon impact. Their distress call was picked up by an air attack plane on a guard channel and relayed to the Copeland Helibase. A Bell 212 helicopter with four emergency medical technicians (EMT) was dispatched to transport the pilot and mechanic to McCall, Idaho for medical treatment. The mechanic was treated and released and the pilot remains hospitalized. An accident investigation team continues their work.

Narrative: On 07/25/2007 while flying a water bucket mission supporting the Loon Fire, the pilot of a Bell 214ST was making an approach to the dip (water) site with a 900 gallon "Bambi" water bucket attached to a 150' longline, flying vertical reference. On approach the pilot felt the winds were light and variable. Approach airspeed was at or below ETL (effective translational lift). At that point, a loss of control of the aircraft caused it to contact the ground resulting in substantial damage to the aircraft.

The NTSB and FAA delegated the investigation to the agency. The Washington Office delegated the investigation to the Regional Forester. The Regional Forester delegated the investigation to Ashley NF Forest Supervisor Kevin Elliott.

On Saturday, July 28, at 1655 hrs, the NTSB provided verbal confirmation that he no longer needed the wreckage of N724HT belonging to our contractor Helicopter Transport Services, Inc. The NTSB will follow-up with written notification during the next business week. The investigation team also has no further need of this wreckage and is in the process for officially releasing the wreckage back to the contractor for removal off National Forest Service system lands.

/s/ Kevin B. Elliott, Team Leader  
Forest Supervisor, Ashley National Forest

cc: Ralph Dorn, Ron Hanks

