National Transportation Safety Board
Washington, DC 20594

Brief of Accident

Adopted 08/21/2001

ANC01TA035
File No. 10358 | 02/04/2001 | Chickaloon, AK | Aircraft Reg No. N7183P | Time (Local): 09:30 AST

Make/Model:	Robinson / R-44
Engine Make/Model:	Lycoming / O-540-F1B5
Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Number of Engines:	1
Operating Certificate(s):	None
Type of Flight Operation:	Public Use
Reg. Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation

	Fatal	Serious	Minor/None
Crew	0	0	1
Pass	0	0	2

Last Depart. Point:	Eureka, AK
Destination:	Local Flight
Airport Proximity:	Off Airport/Airstrip

Condition of Light:	Day
Weather Info Src:	Pilot
Basic Weather:	Visual Conditions
Lowest Ceiling:	None
Visibility:	30.00 SM
Wind Dir/Speed:	090 / 008 Kts
Temperature (°C):	-12
Obstr to Vision:	None
Precipitation:	None

Pilot-in-Command Age: 47

Certificate(s)/Rating(s)
Airline Transport; Flight Instructor; Commercial; Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land; Single-engine Sea; Helicopter
Instrument Ratings
Airplane

Flight Time (Hours)

Total All Aircraft:	17783
Last 90 Days:	35
Total Make/Model:	221
Total Instrument Time:	535

The pilot was transporting two search and rescue volunteers and their equipment to the scene of an avalanche in a float-equipped helicopter. A helicopter landing zone (heli spot) had been established the evening before the accident, near the toe of the avalanche. The heli spot had been used by a military helicopter, and was marked by small flags. The surface of the snow at the heli spot had been dusted by red powder. The pilot of the accident helicopter had not landed at the heli spot before. The heli spot was located at 5,300 feet msl, near the bottom of a small valley. The pilot began his landing approach toward the west. Although the weather conditions were clear, the pilot said the lighting conditions in the valley provided little contrast (flat light). The pilot said that as he began to add power near the termination of the landing approach, the low rotor warning horn sounded, and he noticed that the main rotor gauge was indicating 92 to 94 percent. He reduced collective pitch, ensured the throttle was full open, and began to initiate a go-around toward the west, an area of lower terrain. The helicopter continued to descend, and the right front portion of the landing gear float assembly contacted the snow. About the same time, the main rotor contacted the slope of a small, snow-covered hill, to the right of the helicopter. The helicopter then rolled onto its right side. After the accident, the pilot said he noted that the wind was blowing about 8 knots from the east.

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Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: GO-AROUND (VFR)

Findings
1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - TAILWIND
2. (C) ROTOR RPM - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - OTHER
4. (C) PLANNED APPROACH - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. (F) TERRAIN CONDITION - SNOW COVERED

Occurrence #2: ROLL OVER
Phase of Operation: GO-AROUND (VFR)

Findings Legend: (C) = Cause, (F) = Factor

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident as follows.
The pilot's collision with terrain due to his inadequate planning of the approach, and his failure to maintain the helicopter's main rotor RPM during a go-around. Factors in the accident were a tailwind, flat lighting conditions, and snow-covered terrain.