

ANC08LA040

On March 4, 2008, about 1630 Alaska standard time, a Bell 206L helicopter, N404EH, sustained substantial damage when it collided with terrain, following a loss of control while maneuvering, about 59 miles southeast of Nikolai, Alaska. The helicopter was being operated by the pilot as a visual flight rules (VFR) aerial photography flight under Title 14, CFR Part 91, when the accident occurred. The commercial certificated pilot and sole passenger received minor injuries. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and no flight plan was filed.

During a telephone conversation with the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigator-in-charge (IIC) on March 5, the pilot said he was maneuvering the helicopter while his passenger filmed a dogsled race, when the helicopter impacted terrain. He said there were no preimpact mechanical anomalies with the helicopter. The helicopter received structural damage to the fuselage and rotor system during the collision with terrain.

In a written statement dated March 13, the pilot reported that he was flying along slowly, and a gust of wind caused a loss of tail rotor effectiveness. He said the helicopter started to turn to the right, and he reduced collective pitch and followed the turn to regain control. During the maneuver he said he was losing altitude and approaching terrain. He said a second gust caused a further loss of tail rotor effectiveness, and as the helicopter rotated, the tail rotor struck a tree, and the helicopter impacted the ground.

The helicopter was not examined by the NTSB.

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