

 National Transportation Safety Board PRELIMINARY REPORT AVIATION		NTSB ID: DEN08MA116A		Most Critical Injury: Fatal	
		Occurrence Date: 06/29/2008		Investigated By: NTSB	
		Occurrence Type: Accident		ICAO Report Submitted:	
Location/Time					
Nearest City/Place		State	Zip Code	Local Time	Time Zone
Flagstaff		AZ	86001	1547	MST
Aircraft Information					
Registration Number		Aircraft Manufacturer		Model/Series Number	
N407GA		Bell		407	
Type of Aircraft: Helicopter			Homebuilt Aircraft? No		
Injury Summary:		Fatal	3	Serious	Minor
					None
Sightseeing Flight: No			Air Medical Transport Flight: Medical Emergency		
Narrative					
Brief narrative statement of facts, conditions and circumstances pertinent to the accident/incident:					
<p>On June 29, 2008, at 1547 Mountain Standard Time, a Bell 407 emergency medical service (EMS) helicopter, N407GA, and a Bell 407 EMS helicopter, N407MJ, collided in mid air while approaching the Flagstaff Medical Center helipad (3AZ0), Flagstaff, Arizona. Both helicopters were destroyed. N407GA's commercial pilot, flight nurse, and patient sustained fatal injuries; and N407MJ's commercial pilot, flight paramedic, flight nurse, and patient sustained fatal injuries. N407GA was operated by Air Methods Corp., Englewood, Colorado, and registered to Flagstaff Medical Center, Flagstaff, Arizona. N407MJ was operated by Classic Helicopter Services, Page, Arizona, and registered to M&J Leisure, L.L.C., Ogden, Utah. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed, and company flight plans were filed for each of the Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 135 air medical flights. N407GA's flight departed the Flagstaff Pulliam Airport (FLG), Flagstaff, at 1544, and N407MJ's flight departed the Grand Canyon National Park Service South Rim helibase, Tusayan, Arizona, at 1517.</p> <p>At 1516, the pilot of N407GA, call sign Angel 1, contacted Guardian Air dispatch at FLG and reported that they were departing Winslow, Arizona, with four people on board; the pilot, the two flight nurses and the patient. The pilot stated that his estimated time en route was 25 minutes and he was either going to land at FLG or proceed directly to the Flagstaff Medical Center (FMC) helipad. The pilot was not sure if he would be at the proper weight to land with enough power margin to execute an out of ground effect hover on the rooftop helipad. At 1519, the Guardian Air dispatch transportation coordinator contacted FMC and reported that Angel 1 was inbound to the helipad in approximately 23 minutes.</p> <p>At 1519, the pilot of N407MJ, call sign Lifeguard 2, contacted their communications center and reported that they had departed the south rim of the Grand Canyon and were en route to FMC with an estimated time en route of 32 minutes, and four people on board; the pilot, the flight nurse, the flight paramedic, and the patient. About a minute later, the pilot of Angel 1 called Guardian Air dispatch and reported that they were going to "drop one" at FLG before proceeding to land at Flagstaff Medical Center.</p> <p>At 1523, the dispatcher on duty at Classic Helicopter Service contacted Guardian Air dispatch and reported that Lifeguard 2 was en route to FMC and would be arriving from the north. The dispatcher also reported that it would be a "cold drop," and the emergency department at the hospital had already been notified. The Guardian Air dispatch transportation coordinator then informed the Classic dispatcher that Angel 1 was also en route and would be landing at Flagstaff Medical Center in 20 minutes.</p> <p>At the end of that call, the Guardian Air dispatch transportation coordinator called FMC and stated that Lifeguard 2 would also be landing at the hospital in "about twenty-eight minutes...and they know about mine coming in." The person who answered the phone in the emergency department responded, "all right." The transport coordinator then contacted the pilot of Angel 1 and informed</p>					
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Narrative (Continued)

him that Lifeguard 2 would also be landing at Flagstaff Medical Center in approximately 28 minutes. The pilot responded, "Roger will be looking for 'em thanks."

At 1532, the pilot of Lifeguard 2 contacted the Classic Helicopter Service communication center, provided a position report and said that they were 15 minutes from landing at FMC. The dispatcher on duty responded, "comm center copies all sir...I'll talk to you on the ground in fifteen minutes, 1532." This was the last recorded communication with the pilot of N407MJ.

Also at 1532, the pilot of Angel 1 contacted Guardian Air dispatch and reported that they were 10 minutes from landing at FLG. At 1544, the pilot of Angel 1 contacted Guardian Air dispatch and stated, "control Angel 1 if you haven't figured it out we've uh landed at the...airport departed and we're about two minutes out of the hospital." The transportation coordinator responded and copied the transmission. This was the last recorded communication with the pilot of N407GA.

There were no recorded communications between the pilots of the two helicopters.

A review of the recorded transmissions made between both medical crews and the hospital revealed that both of the medical crews contacted the emergency department at FMC and provided medical reports on their respective patients. At the time Angel 1 contacted the hospital, they provided an estimated time of arrival in 15 minutes. The Classic Helicopter Services medical crew reported an estimated time of arrival of 18 minutes. The hospital staff that received the phone calls from both aircraft did not provide any information about the other helicopter that was also en route to the Flagstaff Medical Center helipad.

Several people witnessed the collision of the helicopters as they approached the hospital helipad and reported seeing both helicopters descending into wooded terrain about 1/4 mile from the heliport. There was a small fire noted rising from the hilly terrain, followed by a loud explosion shortly after the collision.

A surveillance camera, mounted on a parking garage at the hospital, captured the collision on digital video. The video depicted one helicopter approaching from north and one helicopter approaching from the south, and shows both aircraft descending after the collision. The video was sent to the NTSB Vehicle Recorders laboratory, Washington, DC, for further examination.

The accident site was located in a partially wooded, rocky mesa, approximately 1/4 mile east of the FMC helipad at an elevation of 7,060 feet mean sea level. N407GA's main wreckage was located on the top of the mesa in a rocky, grass terrain; and N407MJ's main wreckage was located in wooden terrain. The main wreckages of both helicopters came to rest approximately 300 feet apart from each other. The debris area, approximately 1/4 mile in diameter, contained fragmented sections of main rotor blades, plexiglass, and fiberglass. N407GA was partially consumed by post-impact fire and N407MJ did not have a post-impact fire. N407GA experienced a secondary post-impact explosion approximately 3 minutes after the accident. Three first responders sustained minor injuries during the explosion.

At the time of the accident, the weather was reported as partly cloudy and winds were light and variable.

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Other Aircraft Involved		
Registration Number N407MJ	Aircraft Manufacturer Bell	Model/Series Number 407

Accident Information	
Aircraft Damage: Destroyed	Accident Occurred During: Approach - VFR pattern - base
Property Damage:	

Crew	Name	Certificate No.	Injury
Pilot	On File	On File	Fatal
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

Operator Information			
Name Air Methods Corp.	Operator Designator Code QMLA	Doing Business As	
Street Address 7301 South Peoria	City Englewood	State CO	Zip Code 80112
-Type of Certificate(s) Held:			
Air Carrier Operating Certificate(s): On-demand Air Taxi			
Operating Certificate:		Operator Certificate:	
Regulation Flight Conducted Under: Part 135: Air Taxi & Commuter			
Type of Flight Operations Conducted: Non-scheduled; Domestic; Passenger Only			

Flight Plan/Itinerary			
Type of Flight Plan Filed: Company VFR			
Last Departure Point FLAGSTAFF	State AZ	Airport Identifier FLG	
Destination FLAGSTAFF	State AZ	Airport Identifier 3AZ0	

Weather Information			
Investigator's Source:	Facility ID:	Observation Time (Local): 1545	
Sky/Lowest Cloud Condition: Few		Ft. AGL	
Lowest Ceiling: None	Ft. AGL	Visibility: 10 SM	Altimeter: "Hg

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Weather Information (Continued from page 2)

Temperature: 29 °C	Dew Point: °C	Wind Direction:	
Wind Speed: Kts.	Gusts: Kts.	Weather Conditions at Accident Site: Visual Conditions	

Administration Data

Notification From NTSB Communications Center	Date 06/29/2008	Local Time
FAA District Office/Coordinator Office of Accident Investigation (AAI-100) David Keenan	Investigator-In-Charge (IIC) Aaron M. SAuer	