

**Aircraft type and registration:** Sikorsky S61N G-BFPF (heavy helicopter — public transport)

**Year of Manufacture:** 1971

**Date and time (GMT):** 15 August 1985 at 1817 hrs

**Location:** Aberdeen, Airport

**Type of flight:** Airline non-scheduled passenger

**Persons on board:** Crew — 2                      Passengers — 7

**Injuries:** Crew — None                      Passengers — None

**Nature of damage:** Minor damage to the underside

**Commander's Licence:** Airline Transport Pilot's Licence (Helicopter)

**Commander's Age:** 36 years

**Commander's Total Flying Experience:** 1941 hours (of which 157 were on type)

**Information Source:** Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot.

The aircraft carried out a normal approach and landing during which the undercarriage was checked at the approach and final phases and again at the hover. After landing it was taxied to the East Terminal.

The Captain ensured that the aircraft was secure with the collective lever fully down and friction applied. He then signalled to some ground personnel to approach the aircraft. He also picked up a bundle of documents with the intention of passing them through the window to the ground hostess. Whilst picking up the documents, his thumb touched the undercarriage selector which immediately flicked forward. Although the Captain moved the lever back at once, the aircraft settled onto its underfuselage. The Captain then moved the selector forward to stop the undercarriage pump motor, requested attendance of the fire services, and evacuated the passengers.

The operator's engineering organisation subsequently discovered a significant error in the undercarriage system wiring which appeared to have been introduced during modifications carried out in 1977, before the aircraft came into their ownership. The effect of the error was to cause the selector lever to remain live at all times, irrespective of the action of the "weight-on" micro-switch. Although this should not in itself permit retraction while on the ground, it is thought possible that the presence of the bundle of documents prevented the undercarriage lever from moving fully aft to the latched position.