

No: 3/84

Ref: EW/G84/01/04

Aircraft type and registration: Bell 206L-1 G-WARM (light single engine helicopter)
Year of manufacture: 1979
Date and time (GMT): 25 January 1984 at 0905 hrs
Location: Saddleworth Moor (7 miles SW of Huddersfield)
Type of flight: Positioning flight
Persons on board: Crew – 1 Passengers – Nil
Injuries: Crew – Nil Passengers – N/A
Nature of damage: Substantial damage to tail boom, tail rotor and skids
Commander's Licence: Commercial Pilot's Licence (Helicopters)
Commander's Age: 41 years
Commander's total flying experience: 1150 hours (of which 950 hours were on type)

The aircraft had taken off from a landing site near Oldham at 0900 hrs on 25 January to fly to Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The weather was overcast with a cloud base of 2,000 feet and occasional light snow showers. After approximately four miles, while flying over an area of snow covered moorland which was 1,300 feet above mean sea level, the aircraft encountered a small patch of stratus and light snow and the pilot found himself in a 'white-out' condition and decided to land. The rotor down wash blew up snow on approaching the ground reducing visibility further and the damage to the aircraft was caused during the landing. The pilot walked to the nearest road and returned later in the day to place protective covers on the aircraft.

On 29 January two people walking on the moorland noticed the aircraft and after establishing that there was nobody in it they reported to the police. The police contacted air traffic control, who had no record of any helicopter which could have been in the area at the time. The police, after visiting the accident site, were the first to notify the AIB of the accident.