



Ref: 7674

SOUTH AFRICAN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY**ACCIDENT REPORT – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Aircraft Registration	ZS-HNL	Date of Accident	16 July 2003	Time of Accident	1130Z
Type of Aircraft	ENSTROM F28C-2		Type of Operation		Private
Pilot-in-command Licence Type	Private	Age	22	Licence Valid	Yes
Pilot-in-command Flying Experience	Total Flying Hours	78.1	Hours on Type	78.1	
Last point of departure	Wonderboom Aerodrome (FAWB)				
Next point of intended landing	Wonderboom Aerodrome (FAWB)				
Location of the accident site with reference to easily defined geographical points (GPS readings if possible)					
Hartebeespoort Dam, approximately 20nm West of Wonderboom Aerodrome					
Meteorological Information	The weather was fine and the wind calm.				
Number of people on board	1+1	No. of people injured	1+1	No. of people killed	0

Synopsis

On 16 July 2003 at 1043Z, the pilot was accompanied by a passenger (his girl friend). They departed Wonderboom Aerodrome on a (Hire and Fly) private flight to the Hartebeespoort Dam area.

The pilot initially stated that the cockpit door on the pilot side opened just before he reached the dam but during a turn around from a westerly to an easterly direction, the cockpit door on the passenger's side opened. He then turned the helicopter around to fly to shore in a westerly direction and in attempt to close the door, the helicopter impacted the water. The pilot and passenger exited the helicopter whilst the helicopter sank to the bottom of the dam and were retrieved by boat.

The pilot finally admitted that the doors did not open during flight but that he flew too low over the dam and misjudged the height of the helicopter above the water with the glare of the water giving him a perception of a false horizon.

An eyewitness stated that she was standing at the Yacht Club at the Hartebeespoort Dam when she noticed a helicopter flying in an easterly direction, approximately 10ft above the water. The helicopter then pitched up, turned back in a westerly direction, struck the water and disappeared underneath the surface.

It was very difficult to locate the helicopter in the murky water and it was only located and recovered by divers two days later.

The helicopter was destroyed on impact with the water, but both occupants escaped with minor cuts and bruises.

The last MPI was certified on 24 April 2003 at a total of 3341.0 airframe hours. The aircraft had flown an additional 64.0 hours since the MPI was certified.

Probable Cause

The pilot flew too low above the water and most probably executed a torque turn manoeuvre over the dam and was unable to obtain level flight before the aircraft impacted the water.