



Ref: 7873

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

Aircraft Registration	ZS-RRP	Date of Accident	3 November 2004	Time of Accident	0830Z	
Type of Aircraft	EUROCOPTER EC130-B4		Type of Operation		Commercial	
Pilot-in-command Licence Type		Commercial	Age	33	Licence Valid	Yes
Pilot-in-command Flying Experience		Total Flying Hours	4 982.1		Hours on Type	75.1
Last point of departure		Alpine Heath Resort in Drakensberg				
Next point of intended landing		Landing site on top of the mountains.				
Location of the accident site with reference to easily defined geographical points (GPS readings if possible)						
Alpine Heath Resort, Drakensberg (GPS position: 28° 36.65" South 029° 00.27" East, elevation ± 5 000 feet)						
Meteorological Information		Fine: Wind – SE/10kts, Temperature 28°C, Cloud cover 7/8 at 8 500 feet				
Number of people on board	1 + 5	No. of people injured	1 + 0	No. of people killed	0	
Synopsis		<p>The aircraft was chartered for the purposes of ferrying passengers to a certain location in the Drakensberg mountain range where they would have attended a marriage ceremony. The aircraft was ferried from the Cathedral Peak Hotel (permanent base) to the Alpine Heath Resort earlier the morning. The bride, groom and guests (passengers) were all gathered at the Alpine Heath Resort from where they would have departed to a location in the mountains in two loads.</p> <p>The first load was flown to the location where after the aircraft returned to uplift the second load of passengers. After the pilot had briefed everybody they boarded the aircraft. According to available video footage of the first and second flight it was evident that the pilot followed a different take-off path on the second flight, by remaining low-level passing to the left of a nearby boma. Once past the boma the pilot initiated a right turn, when suddenly a loud bang followed with the windshield shattering on the left-hand side of the aircraft followed by control difficulty and a severe vibration. The pilot managed to remain in control of the aircraft and executed an uneventful forced landing approximately 500m further on. After all the occupants had disembarked it became evident that they had collided with a cable. The cable formed part of a zip-line construction, which was spanned across a dam, and located approximately 100m behind the boma. The event must have occurred at a height of between 60-100 feet AGL with the cable striking the aircraft on the nose at approximately knee height with reference to the front-seated passengers. The pilot sustained some injury to his right lower leg when the instrument panel became dislodged and fell over. Some of the passengers were severely traumatised by the event and some sustained whiplash with stiff necks the following morning. The aircraft was substantially damaged during the impact sequence.</p>				
Probable Cause						
<p>The pilot failed to observe a galvanised steel cable, which was spanned across a dam at a height of approximately 60-100 feet AGL, forming part of a zip-line construction. Shortly after take-off, impact followed on the nose section of the aircraft. Although the aircraft sustained substantial damage as a result of the collision the pilot managed to execute an uneventful forced landing approximately 500m further on down a valley.</p>						