



AVIATION



HIGHWAY



MARINE



RAILROAD



PIPELINE

Aviation Investigation Preliminary Report

Location:	Huntington Beach, CA	Accident Number:	CEN26FA015
Date & Time:	October 11, 2025, 14:01 Local	Registration:	N222EX
Aircraft:	Bell 222	Injuries:	3 Serious, 2 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

On October 11, 2025, at 1401 Pacific daylight time, a Bell 222 helicopter, N222EX, was substantially damaged when it was involved in an accident near Huntington Beach, California. The pilot and passenger received serious injuries. One person on the ground received serious injuries and two others received minor injuries. The helicopter was operated as a Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 personal flight.

The pilot reported that he and the passenger departed from Redlands, California, and intended to land in a Huntington Beach parking lot for a large public event. The pilot approached Huntington Beach from north, then circled for a high-speed pass above Pacific Coast Highway headed northwest. The pilot circled again and completed a slow pass above the highway, then approached the parking lot from southeast. As the helicopter descended above the parking lot, he made a small right pedal input to straighten the helicopter, then the nose veered left, and he heard a loud noise from the back left side. The pilot turned right and increased the power to fly away from the confined landing area. As the right turn rate increased, the pilot was unable to maintain control of the helicopter.

Witness photos and videos revealed that during the high-speed pass, there were no apparent anomalies with the helicopter. During the slow pass, one of the tail rotor pitch links was disconnected from a tail rotor blade. As the helicopter approached the parking lot for landing, the pitch link remained disconnected (see figure 1).



Figure 1. The accident helicopter before landing. A red callout shows a zoomed in view of the tail rotor assembly and a disconnected pitch link.

The helicopter turned right and ascended as pieces of the tail rotor assembly began to separate. The tail rotor gearbox separated in half and the output side remained attached to the tail rotor assembly, then landed in the parking lot. The helicopter continued to spin right then impacted a staircase at the end of a pedestrian bridge.

Postaccident examination of the separated tail rotor assembly revealed that both pitch horns were fractured in half. All pitch horn bolts and associated hardware remained installed and secure.

The helicopter was retained for further examination.

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Bell	Registration:	N222EX
Model/Series:	222	Aircraft Category:	Helicopter
Amateur Built:			
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Designator Code:			

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	VMC	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KSNA,43 ft msl	Observation Time:	13:53 Local
Distance from Accident Site:	6 Nautical Miles	Temperature/Dew Point:	23°C /15°C
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 1800 ft AGL	Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	10 knots / None, 200°
Lowest Ceiling:		Visibility:	10 miles
Altimeter Setting:	29.77 inches Hg	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	VFR
Departure Point:	Redlands, CA (KREI)	Destination:	Huntington Beach, CA

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	1 Serious, 2 Minor	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	3 Serious, 2 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	33.650628,-117.99198

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Lindberg, Joshua
Additional Participating Persons:	Tim Lerma; FAA; Long Beach, CA
Investigation Class:	Class 3
Note:	