

FATALITY ALERT

– PRELIMINARY INFORMATION –

BCFSC #2021-10-04

A pilot was fatally injured at a heli-logging operation on October 4th. The helicopter he was operating crashed into the ocean near Killam Bay which is north of Sechelt, BC. The following information has been released by the Transportation Safety Board about this incident:

On 4 October 2021, a Kaman K-MAX (K-1200) helicopter operated by Black Tusk Helicopters Inc., was conducting helicopter logging operations in the vicinity of Killam Bay, British Columbia (BC). The helicopter was transporting logs from a cut block to an ocean pen approximately 0.6 nautical miles to the northwest. About 1 minute after the helicopter departed the cut block, a loud noise was heard by the cut block workers coming from the area of the ocean pen. A company support helicopter was sent to search the area of the ocean pen since the pilot could not be contacted by radio and did not return to the cut block. The support helicopter found debris in the water and a sheen on the water. A search and rescue effort was launched but was unable to locate the helicopter. Portions of the rotor blades were recovered by searchers. The helicopter was located 8 days after the occurrence approximately 150 m west of the initial collision with water, and at a depth of approximately 110 m. The pilot, who was the only person on board, was fatally injured.

We extend our condolences to the family and friends of the deceased and our sympathies to all those affected by this incident.

This is the 6th harvesting fatality of 2021.

This incident remains under investigation by Transport Canada, Transportation Safety Board of Canada, RCMP and the BC Coroners Service. Details are yet to be released.

The following safety information should be reviewed to help prevent further serious incidents:

1. Planning is a critical step for maintaining safety in all forestry operations. Identifying hazards and implementing actions to reduce risks takes time so it's important inspect the worksite early.
2. Anticipate changes to the worksite. Forestry operations often experience changes in the weather, terrain and equipment on site. Manage those changes to maintain safety on site and be prepared to shut down if necessary.
3. Upset conditions occur when something unexpected occurs that contributes to an incident. Examples include: mechanical breakdowns, a sudden worker shortage or any other surprise event. Learn to recognize upset conditions in the worksite and with your co-workers.
4. Emergency Response Plans (ERPs) and drills need to address all types of emergencies including aircraft operations, if applicable.