Beat: News

Helicopter crashes during rescue operation in Alaska, killing 3

-, 01.04.2013, 03:05 Time

USPA News - An Alaska State Troopers helicopter crashed Saturday night during a rescue operation in the south-central part of the state, killing two troopers and a rescued snowmobiler, state and federal officials said on Sunday. There were no survivors.

The accident happened at around 11:17 p.m. local time on Saturday when the Eurocopter AS350 B3 aircraft went down about 4.5 miles (7.2 kilometers) east of Talkeetna in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, or about 77 miles (124 kilometers) north of Anchorage. It was carrying three people. Troopers spokeswoman Megan Peters said it launched a rescue mission at around 7:35 p.m. local time on Saturday after its detachment in Palmer received a report of a stranded snowmobiler near Larson Lake, which is located about 6.5 miles (10.5 kilometers) east of Talkeetna. Peters said Helo 1 responded and, after picking up a trooper, proceeded to the search area where they located the snowmobiler at around 9:58 p.m. local time. "At approximately 2317 hours, Helo 1 was en-route to Sunshine Tesoro to meet with medics, but never arrived," she said. "Contact with Helo 1 was lost and a search and rescue was initiated." An aircraft from the Rescue Coordination Center (RCC), which is operated by the Alaska Air National Guard, located the wreckage of the helicopter at around 9:33 a.m. on Sunday. "[The aircraft] searched for survivors, but none were found," the spokeswoman said, giving no other details. The cause of Saturday`s accident was not immediately known, but Peters said an investigation is underway. Ian Gregor, a spokesman for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), said both the FAA and the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) will investigate the crash. "NTSB is the lead investigative agency," he said.

Article online:
https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-729/helicopter-crashes-during-rescue-operation-in-alaska-killing-3.html

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Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619