



inevitable. Despite his efforts to recover the situation, the aircraft struck the sea, banked to the right in a slightly nose-down attitude. Almost certainly at this time, the right sponson separated from the fuselage. The helicopter immediately rolled inverted and settled into a nose-down attitude, sinking slowly. Three of the four crew members effected a rapid escape from the aircraft, but the winchman escaped only because the others opened the rear port emergency exit from the outside. All four then boarded the liferaft, to await rescue.

At 2058 hrs, the Coastguard controller, appreciating the lack of normal radio telephonic communications (RTF) with the helicopter, declared an emergency to the Rescue Co-ordination Centre, at Edinburgh, who, at 2103 hrs, scrambled a Royal Air Force Sea King helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth to their rescue. This decision was supported by a 999 call received by the police near Kinlochbervie, at 2052 hrs. The rescue was effected at 2213 hrs and the S 61 crew were returned to Stornoway for medical checks.

The Chief Inspector of Accidents has ordered an Inspector's Investigation into this accident.