

Schweizer 269C-1, G-BXTM, 4 January 1999 at 1450 hrs

AAIB Bulletin No: 4/99 Ref: EW/G99/01/02 Category: 2.3

Aircraft Type and Registration: Schweizer 269C-1, G-BXTM

No & Type of Engines: 1 Lycoming HO-360-C1A piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1998

Date & Time (UTC): 4 January 1999 at 1450 hrs

Location: Oxford Airport

Type of Flight: Training

Persons on Board: Crew - 2 - Passengers - None

Injuries: Crew - Minor - Passengers - N/A

Nature of Damage: Extensive

Commander's Licence: Airline Transport Pilot's Licence (Helicopters)

Commander's Age: 63 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 11,951 hours (of which 952 were on type)
Last 90 days - 116 hours
Last 28 days - 21 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The helicopter had been operating on the airfield and the student pilot had completed three circuits. The instructor decided to discontinue the training at this point because the wind was gusting to an estimated 20 to 30 kt. He took control with the intention of making a towering take off, transitioning into wind and positioning the helicopter in order to cross the runway to return to the landing pad. As the helicopter climbed through 20 feet during the towering take off the instructor realised that he was overpitching and that the engine RPM was falling below the lower limit for power on. He reduced collective pitch in order to regain RPM but immediately noticed a very high sink rate that he considered was probably caused by a brief lull in the wind. He increased collective pitch in an attempt to avoid ground contact but was unable to prevent the helicopter striking the ground hard vertically and with a slight rearward velocity. The aircraft then slewed and rolled to the right, coming to rest on its right side. Both the instructor and student extricated themselves from the aircraft, the latter with some difficulty, and awaited the arrival of the emergency services. There was no fire.