

ACCIDENT

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Robinson R22 Beta, G-OHFT	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming O-320-B2C piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1989	
Date & Time (UTC):	20 April 2006 at 1449 hrs	
Location:	Gloucestershire Airport	
Type of Flight:	Training	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - 1 (Minor)	Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Damaged beyond economic repair	
Commander's Licence:	Student Pilot	
Commander's Age:	40 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	89 hours (all on type) Last 90 days - 4 hours Last 28 days - 1 hour	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and further telephone enquiries by the AAIB	

Synopsis

During a solo, hover taxiing exercise on the airfield, the student pilot lost control of the helicopter and the right hand skid contacted the ground. The helicopter rolled onto its right side, breaking off the rotor blades and shattering the canopy in the process.

History of the flight

The student, who had not flown for 28 days, was briefed by his instructor to carry out solo general handling exercises around the airfield. After a normal start, he hover taxied the helicopter approximately 600 m to a position just south of Runway 27. Here he maintained the helicopter in a low hover awaiting clearance to cross both this runway, and Runway 22, which was the

active runway. When clearance was received the hover taxi was recommenced on a northerly heading with the surface wind from 190° at 8 kt. Having crossed Runway 27 the pilot reduced his groundspeed to near zero and commenced a turn to the left in order to cross Runway 22 on a perpendicular track. During this turn, he stated that the helicopter began to oscillate in roll and then pitched nose down causing the right hand skid to contact the ground. The helicopter rolled to the right and struck the ground on its right side, breaking the rotor blades and shattering the perspex canopy in the process. The pilot, who was wearing a lap and diagonal seatbelt, was able to vacate the wreckage with minor cuts and bruises.

Witnesses assessed the hover height just prior to the accident at approximately 5 ft although the pilot estimated that he was at 15 ft. His instructor commented that the normal hover taxi height would be between 5 and 10 ft.

Discussion

The accident occurred whilst the student pilot was hover taxiing downwind at a lower height (albeit the correct one) than he probably realised. This meant that when control difficulties were experienced during the turn, he probably overestimated the height available in which to rectify the situation. The flying school required student pilots to fly with an instructor if they had not flown within

the previous 30 days. Although he was technically just within this limit, it is likely that a pilot with his limited experience would have found these judgment exercises demanding, having not flown for 28 days.

Follow up action

As a result of this accident, the flying school involved has amended its Flying Order Book which now states:

'a student who has not flown for 10 days shall have a dual flight, duration as required, prior to any solo flight'.