



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Jim Silliman
Air Safety Investigator
Central Region

Date: 8/27/15
Person Contacted: Pilot: John Marcotte
NTSB Accident Number: CEN15LA379

Narrative:

The pilot reported that there was nothing abnormal about the takeoff. The wind was calm and he was flying about 300-400 ft agl (typical cruising altitude) with 80 – 90 kts airspeed. He had flown about 1/2 mile from the airport heading northeast when there was a sudden “boom.” There were no abnormal vibrations or noises before the “boom.”

He stated that there was a sudden left yaw (in another interview he admitted that it could have been a right yaw). He immediately lowered the collective and entered an autorotation. The nose dropped and he pulled back on the cyclic to keep the helicopter level, although he said he pulled back on the cyclic unconsciously. He was concerned whether he would clear a tree line, but he did. The whole time from the onset of the emergency to the landing was probably 15 – 20 seconds, not more than 30 seconds. He wasn’t sure how long it lasted with any certainty. He wasn’t sure about how high he was when he flared. He had never done a practice autorotation from 300 ft agl. He flared the helicopter at around 40 kts and 40 ft agl and the nose yawed left very drastically. He pulled the collective – but he wasn’t exactly sure if he did or not. The skids hit about level and the helicopter rolled over on its right side.

He reported that the main rotor wasn’t in “too bad of shape” and he wasn’t sure if the main rotor hit the tail boom. The vertical stabilizer separated from the tail boom. The bottom fin of the vertical stabilizer was “shredded” but the top fin was in good shape. The tail rotor gearbox bolts were stripped out of the tail rotor gearbox mount.

He stated that he didn’t hit a tree and he didn’t see any birds close to the helicopter, although there were some buzzards a few hundred yards away. He wasn’t sure if the tail rotor or gearbox caused the problem.

He has about 150 hours of flight time. He just received his private pilot’s license about 6 months ago in February 2015.



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Air Safety Investigator
Central Region

Date: 10/5/15
Person Contacted: Pilot: John Marcotte
NTSB Accident Number: CEN15LA379

Narrative:

The pilot stated that the nose should have yawed to the right when I lost the tail rotor. He stated that it probably did, since there's no way that it could have gone to the left. He stated that he might have been mistaken about that. But he did state that the nose definitely yawed to the left when he flared the helicopter. The whole event lasted around 15 – 20 seconds.

He stated the he landed in Ketchum by the fuel pumps. He grounded the helicopter and then tried to swipe his credit card in the self-service fuel pumps, but it didn't work. He ungrounded the helicopter and departed. He stated that he didn't remove the fuel cap or unravel the fuel hose.

He did see the fuel cap on the ground at the accident site. But that was after the FAA inspectors had examined the wreckage and gathered all the parts together at the main wreckage.



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Jim Silliman
Air Safety Investigator
Central Region

Date: 5/25/16
Person Contacted: Pilot: John Marcotte
NTSB Accident Number: CEN15LA379

Narrative:

The pilot stated that he typically does not remove the fuel cap during the preflight. He checks to make sure the cap is on tight, but he doesn't remove it. He checks the fuel level by looking at the fuel gauges. He didn't have any reason to remove the fuel cap since he didn't intend to look into the tank.

He did not have any recollection of removing the fuel cap during his preflight or when he went to get fuel at Ketchum.

He saw the fuel cap on the ground at the accident site, but that was after the parts had been moved to get the wreckage ready for transport.