

CEN21LA216 Factual Information

On May 12, 2021, about 1530 central daylight time, an Aerospatiale (Airbus) AS350 B2 helicopter, N841BP, was destroyed when it was involved in an accident near Yukon, Oklahoma. The pilot receiving instruction and the flight instructor were not injured. The helicopter was operated as a *14 CFR Part 91* public aircraft instructional flight.

According to the flight crew, the pilot receiving instruction (pilot) was enrolled in the US Customs and Border Protection Initial Pilot Certification course for the AS350 B2. The flight departed the Will Rogers International Airport (KOKC) and proceeded to the Clarence Page Municipal Airport (KRCE) to conduct training maneuvers. After arrival at KRCE, the flight crew conducted several approaches to the airport including confined area and pinnacle approaches. They then conducted several simulated emergencies, each of which required the helicopter's hydraulic system to be turned off and then turned back on at the conclusion of the procedure. The hydraulic system was turned off and on using the hydraulic cut-off switch, an unguarded push-button switch mounted on the end of the pilot's collective stick.

After the simulated emergencies, the flight crew proceeded to conduct a series of "quick stops." After the third quick stop, the pilot heard a radio call indicating an airplane was on final approach to land on the runway they were using, and the flight instructor indicated that they would clear the runway. The pilot added that he completed a final quick stop and immediately entered a climbing left turn.

The pilot stated that in the turn, he noticed the helicopter yawing left, and his pedal inputs were unable to correct the yaw. When the pilot adjusted his grip on the collective, he felt the hydraulic cut-off button with his thumb as he prepared to reduce collective. As he tightened his grip on the collective, "the hydraulics came offline aggravating the left yaw into a hard left spin." The controls were stiff, and the flight instructor told him to turn the hydraulics back on. The pilot "intentionally pressed the [hydraulic cut-off] button but felt no effect." He pressed the button a second time, but the hydraulic light on the caution warning panel remained illuminated, so he pressed the button a third time.

The flight instructor reported that on the last quick stop, the helicopter slowed normally but then started a left yaw about 25 ft above ground level. After the helicopter yawed about 30° left of centerline, he pushed forward on the cyclic to gain airspeed. The flight instructor stated that "as the aircraft was recovering, the control loads instantly became excessive," and he noticed the hydraulic light on the caution warning panel was illuminated. He told the pilot to turn on the hydraulics; however, the hydraulic pressure was never restored. [The flight instructor told the pilot that he was taking control of the helicopter. However, the pilot did not relinquish control.](#) The flight instructor attempted to regain control of the helicopter but was unable to overcome the high control loads.

The helicopter continued to spin, impacted the ground in a nose-down attitude, rolled over, and came to rest on its right side. Both occupants were able to exit the helicopter before a postimpact fire consumed most of the helicopter.

The US Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine Operations Division reported that the agency's selection process for the Air Interdiction Agent Program failed to properly identify that the pilot was not qualified for the program.