

Pilot Statement

On approach to ship shoal 150c I observed the windsock indicating the winds were out of approximately 360 with a gust from approximately 020 on approach I noted my ground speed was showing 9 knots and my indicated airspeed approximately 30 to 33 knots. Once reaching the platform before setting down N414RL I turned the helicopter approximately to a heading of 040, to allow the passengers to exit the helicopter to the stairway 90 degrees from me. Once the passengers disembarked and I had finished writing in my paperwork I asked if everyone was ready to go, and I rolled up the helicopter to 100% and prepared to take off. As I was lifting off I recall the passengers saying something about not having a boat and the helicopter being the only way they can get around. As I began lifting the helicopter up I felt the front part of the skids come off the helideck and then I felt the wind push against the helicopter. As I raised the collective the helicopter rolled over towards the right side then I realized the skid was stuck when the helicopter was about 20 degrees over. By the time I could react the helicopter was already going over the side. I remember seeing the side of the platform as I was falling sideways, and I grabbed the handle to deploy the floats. Then we hit the water and I banged my head on something. The next thing I remember is opening my eyes to and all I could see was a brown light below me, and trying to unbuckle my seatbelt. I eventually got free and felt around for the window and it was partially pushed out so I force my way out of the helicopter and swam towards the light. When I got to the top I began searching for my passengers. I swam around to the other side of the helicopter I found chase hanging on to the raft and chad was on the helicopter. Chase was having problems with his back and he didn't remember how to inflate his PFD so I reached for his beads and pulled them for him. I then inflated my PFD and chad and myself helped get chase into the raft. Afterwards chad climbed into the raft with us.

William COIT - [REDACTED] 12/17/22

Joshua Lindberg

From: Aycock, Harold (FAA) [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, January 31, 2023 3:08 PM
To: Lindberg Joshua
Subject: FW: Additional information regarding 414rl

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Received this from Mr. Colt last night.

From: William Colt [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 30, 2023 6:43 PM
To: Aycock, Harold (FAA) [REDACTED]
Subject: Additional information regarding 414rl

Good evening Ed,

There are two things I would like to add to my statement, the first being the positioning of the helicopter prior to the take-off attempt. When I looked down to write on my clipboard I noticed the front corner of the center circle, specifically a small portion of the outer diameter of the circle about half the width of the paint of the circle was visible just behind my left foot. the second thing I wish to add is the method of takeoff. two weeks and two days prior to the accident I was doing training with Mr. Champagen in the 407 prior to my contract being upgraded to a 407. he taught me this new method for taking off which I've never been shown or used in any of my prior flying. the method consists of raising the front skids off of the ground first by introducing a bit of aft cyclic and holding it there prior to lifting to a hover. this seems to work well in a 407 because I did this for two weeks in 407 without any cause for concern. The day before the accident I was called and told I was going to be flying on a different contract than the one I was supposed to. one I haven't flown before. The contract took me to a platform I have never been to before, in a 206L-4. I did the same method of take-off that I had just recently been shown. Though I feel the differences in the landing gear system could have been contributing factors to the accident. the 407 has a swivel-type mount on the rear side of the landing gear. the 206 I was flying I don't recall if it had the strait tubes on the back or the curved ones. I think it is possible these factors may have contributed to the stinger on the rear of the aircraft being lower than it should be during normal take-off. I believe it's possible that the stinger was the thing that got trapped in the skirting or lights around the helideck, which started the initial roll, as well as the gusting wind that accelerated it in that direction.

that's all I have to add for now, I hope that aids in the investigation.

Best regards

William Colt