

James Rahming

Tampa, FL 33604

Description of accident: James Rahming

I was picked up by my CFI Instructor Victoria Rahming at KPIE on Dec. 2nd 2013, around 5:15pm local time for one hour of training. We left KPIE and transitioned through Class Bravo airspace to KTPF. After reaching KTPF we shot a normal approach to runway 22. We took off and this time shot a steep approach to the same runway (22). Our third pattern we practiced an autorotation to runway 22, entering at 500 feet and 70 knots did a power recovery and took off again.

The 4th pattern, again runway 22 (wind still favoring runway 22) we did a pre-landing check, and the Instructor Victoria Rahming pulled Carb heat and we entered an autorotation at 500 feet, 70 knots. I executed the autorotation entry by keeping the speed at 65kts and RPM in the green, about 40 feet we bled off airspeed by making baby flares and right before leveling out I rolled on the throttle, but the governor did not take over and rpm started to decay. Instructor Victoria Rahming was with me every step in executing this maneuver. We both noticed that the rpm kept decaying. At this point the Instructor Victoria Rahming instructed me that she had the controls. She executed a hovering auto. The helicopter impacted the ground (grassy area beside the runway) bounced, rolled over and came to an immediate stop.

Once the helicopter stopped the roll and it was safe to exit the aircraft she immediately loosened her seatbelt, climbed out of the cockpit and assisted me in exiting the helicopter. We were both unharmed. We gathered our stuff from the helicopter and waited for help. We stayed at the scene off the accident until Airport Authority arrived to evaluate the accident.

I believe, because of the play in the throttle twist grip this accident happened. I have inspected other R22's and it appeared to me that both throttle twist grips on student side and instructor side should be in unison with each other. I have given FAA investigator Michael Singleton a copy of the video showing the differences in play that my instructor had on her side. I recall her questioning the mechanic on this matter and he told her that is normal and the aircraft is safe to fly. To my knowledge having a ¼ play in the throttle grip is not normal. I hope the results show that this accident was due to mechanic (equipment) malfunction. I have flown different R22's during my training and none of them indicated a ¼ inch of throttle twist grip.

Please understand that I am not writing this to "defend" Instructor Victoria Rahming because she is my wife. CFI Victoria Rahming is an excellent and competent instructor and respected by all of her students. I am confident if it would have been her pilot error she would have immediately admitted to it. She did everything to make the landing as safe as possible and without doubt I felt safe throughout the entire incident even though we had a dynamic rollover. Victoria Rahming is a very safe pilot and CFI and she handled the incident extremely well and with calmness I am quite jealous of. Amazingly Victoria flew the aircraft until the last moment, and I am more than thankful to her for keeping me safe. Victoria and I learned a lot out of this experience and we are both committed to further increase our safety in flight.

Sincerely,
James Rahming