

E-mail Statement/Exchange with Passenger
ERA18LA192

The passenger e-mailed the Federal Aviation Administration inspector-in-charge (FAA-IIC) the following verbatim statement on July 19, 2018, at 1635 EDT.

“On Saturday July 14th Mark Kukucka and I decided to go for a helicopter ride. Mark did a pre flight check. I also went over the helicopter as if I were the pilot. We probably spend more time pre flying than most people, that's just us. Mark had the helicopter fueled before takeoff. We flew over where my son was playing a game and then we headed to Shoestring airport in PA. We approached the runway and started to land (it looked like to me toward the end of the runway).

I am always looking at Mark and communicating as we fly. I looked over at his face and saw a look I have never seen before. Immediately after, we went into a spin. I looked at him as much as I could and he stayed calm and tried to work the problem. Next thing I know is we landed on his side of the helicopter on it's side. He unhooked my seatbelt for me and we crawled out of one of the areas where the plexiglass was broken. I have never been in an aircraft where anything like this has ever happened. I have always felt safe with Mark. If there is anything wrong with the aircraft I hope this never happens to anyone else. They may not end up as lucky as Mark and I.

Thank you,
Nicole Kline”

In response, on August 6, 2018, the FAA-IIC asked her to clarify the following information:

“Nicole,

Thank you for your statement. I have a few other questions.

1. You stated “I went over the helicopter as if I were the pilot. We probably spend more time pre flying than most people.” Are you currently in training or been in training for you any type of pilot certificate?
2. Can you estimate the amount of time you spent pre flying the helicopter and did you note any discrepancies?
3. Could you expand more on the aircraft “spinning” starting with what you were doing prior to the spin, and the direction of rotation.
4. You stated “we landed on his side of the helicopter on its side.” Can you describe this further, Which side of the aircraft where you seated in just for clarity.”

In response on August 7, 2018, the passenger provided the following verbatim:

“Hello William,
I’m going to answer your 4 questions.

1. I had my STUDENT fixed wing license in my early twenties. I did not go any further with my training. I'm now 44 years old.
2. I don't keep track of the time spent on pre-flighting the helicopter. I can tell you it's a very thorough pre-flight.
3. Prior to spinning in a clockwise direction of rotation, Mark started to land the helicopter. I looked over at him and saw a look on his face I've never seen before.
(Disturbed look) Immediately after we started spinning.
4. I was seated on the right, just like a passenger in a car"