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Aviation Safety - Eastern Region (AS-ERA)

Date: November 28, 2022

Subject: ERA23LA072 Conversation with FAA Inspector

Contact: Inspector Rodney Hood, Atlanta FSDO

The following is a record of conversation with Inspector Rodney Hood of the Atlanta FSDO. Inspector Hood called me on November 28, 2022.

He stated that the gyroplane landed and then took off with a tailwind and that it was an experimental aircraft. He stated that the pilot received his rotorcraft rating in August. He and a friend had decided to do a touch-and-go at this airport. Several witnesses reported that the pilot landed, came to a stop mid-runway then spooled back up, rotated, and attempted to gain altitude. The helicopter failed to gain altitude and started to "mush." The pilot initiated a 180° turn back to the runway; however, the gyrocopter touched the ground during the turn back. The gyroplane's rotor assembly, fuselage and tail section were substantially damaged. The passenger sustained a broken collarbone. The passenger told Inspector Hood that he weighed 215 lbs. There were 80 pounds of fuel at takeoff and pilot's last medical indicated that he weighed 247 lbs. The pilot reported that he completed a weight and balance calculation and had a 600 lb load limit. The pilot told him that there were no airworthiness issues that would have prevented normal flight and that he failed to get RPMs up to where they should have been before he took off. One commercial pilot who witnessed the accident stated that the pilot should not have been landing downwind.