

Ryan Enders
Aviation Accident Investigator
Eastern Region

Date: May 13, 2024

Subject: ERA24LA215 Conversation with Pilot

Contact: Paul Pereira, Pilot

On May 13, 2024, the pilot of N969VS was contacted by telephone. The below is a summary of the conversation:

Mr. Pereira was asked to give a summary of the accident sequence. His summary included that he was practicing autorotation's with another pilot. They are both instructors. They did about four practice auto rotations to a power recovery with no incidents. Neither of them has a lot of time in this particular aircraft. Both are large helicopter pilots, and this is a smaller helicopter. They were practicing this because next week he was supposed to fly with other pilots to do touchdown recovery.

They were practicing at Crestview Airport in the grass area east of the runway near the windsock. The glide was normal, everything was normal, with the exception of the flare. He didn't reduce the rate of descent enough. Coming out of the flare, he leveled the aircraft but not enough. The helicopter was still moving fast. He raised the nose to settle, but it was too much. The tail boom touched the ground. When it rocked forward, he felt and heard the "thunk" from the main blades hitting the tail boom. Nothing violent happened, so he just shutdown the helicopter. There was obvious shaking from the helicopter. After the shutdown, they got out and the tail boom was laying on the ground. The main blades were also crinkled and bent. There was a lot of activity at the airport, but the FBO sent a golf cart over to retrieve them. There was no fire.

The 6120 was explained to Mr. Pereira and that it would be due May 23.

The pilot was asked if he had spoken to the FAA. He responded that he did not know who to speak to. He called their FAA representative but did not get an answer, so he left a voicemail. The FAA did not go on-scene.

Mr. Pereira was asked if he had taken photos of the helicopter. He responded with "yes, half a dozen" and that he would send those with the returned 6120 form.

Ryan Enders asked if there were any problems with the helicopter prior to the accident and the pilot responded that there were no problems with the aircraft, it was just his technique.

What is the name of the other pilot? Victor Hawkins.

Do you have his contact information? Not with him currently, but it will be included in the report.

Mr. Pereira verified that he was the one flying, and that Victor was just observing, He stated that Victor is a qualified pilot but was essentially there for weight purposes, since that changes the way autorotation occurs. He stated that neither of them was injured and verified that his email is [REDACTED].

Paul asked what happens next. The 6120 was explained and that the report would be accompanied by the public docket in a few months. Since he had not heard from the FAA, Ryan Enders said he would call as well to see who is assigned.

-End of Conversation.