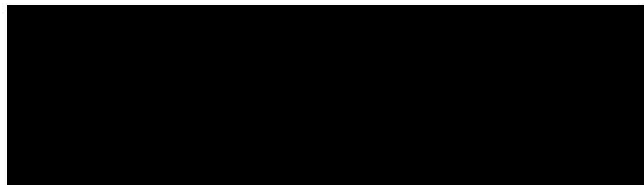


On my check ride everything was going good until the landing. When I was coming into land I pulled the power out too fast once I saw that I was going to make the runway. I was already coming in slow and I pulled more power out than I initially thought I had. This resulted in a dramatic loss of airspeed and a hard landing. We bounced then landed the plane and taxied back to maintenance. I should have used trim to help keep the nose down so I would have had better control of my airspeed. I also should have gone around. This happened on April 27, 2016.

Colton Hodge



On April 27, 2016 I occupied the right seat of a C-172 (N35387.) I was conducting a Private Pilot Practical exam while being observed by my Principal Operations Inspector from the Will Rogers FSDO. My POI occupied the left passenger seat. This practical exam was part of the required observation for my hopeful DPE designation.

The weather was VFR with a light crosswind from the west. I believe winds were reported to be 240 at 7kts at the time of our landings.

The oral portion of the practical exam was successful. I considered the applicant to be well prepared and above average. After the oral exam, I conducted a pre-flight briefing and established the fact that the applicant would be the pilot in command during the flight.

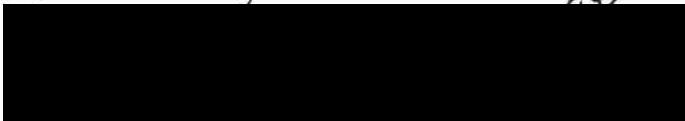
The majority of the flight was uneventful and within PTS standards. On the return trip to the airport, I told the applicant to demonstrate a cross wind landing from a straight in approach to runway 17. During the approach, the applicant seemed to struggle with his crosswind landing technique. He was indecisive with the rudder while over compensating for the crosswind. This being so, he elected to execute a go around procedure from short final.

The second attempt mirrored his first but this time he continued the approach. His airspeed was slower than I preferred but still within safety margins, approximately 60kts. Upon reaching the runway threshold, the applicant suddenly pulled his power to idle. I'm estimating we were approximately 10 to 15 feet off the ground. His sudden reduction in power resulted in an excessive sink rate and subsequent hard landing. We landed on the main landing gear. The aircraft did not hit nose first.

I was able to gain control of the aircraft after the sudden reduction in power but I was unable to do so before the hard landing. I was, however, able to control the airplane after the landing and prevent situation from escalating. I believe my actions were appropriate and as swift as can be expected.

After the landing, I remained in control of the aircraft. I exited the runway and told the applicant that the practical exam was unsatisfactory. I taxied the aircraft to the Southeastern Oklahoma State University maintenance hangar and informed them of the hard landing. A subsequent inspection revealed damage to the aircraft's firewall at the point where the nose gear is attached.

4-28-16



Inspector Statement

by Julie R. Orrick, Aviation Safety Inspector

Will Rogers (WRS) Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) SW-15, OK 73108

April 28, 2016

On April 27, 2016, I was performing an initial DPE observation from the back seat. The DPE candidate, Kyle V. Thomas, and the Private pilot applicant, John C. Hodge, were in the front left seat. The observation was performed at Durant, Oklahoma (KDUA). The ground portion of the Private pilot practical was satisfactory and the DPE applicant proceeded to the flight portion. The aircraft utilized was a C-172-R, N35387. Appropriate maintenance logbooks were checked and preflight performed with the DPE monitoring the student performing the preflight. The preflight was performed with no deficiencies noted.

The Area of Operations were performed during previous flight segments with satisfactory result prior to the landing tasks. The flight proceeded to the Area of Operation IV, Takeoff and Landings. The student performed a go-around for the first approach. There was a light crosswind of 6kts during the landing phase. The second approach, the student pulled the power early, the DPE reached for the throttle as the aircraft touched down, the DPE proceeded to land the aircraft. The landing was firm but was not a nose gear landing. The DPE proceeded to taxi in and state to the student that it was an unsatisfactory landing and as a preventative measure, he would take and have maintenance verify no damage. He also stated due to the landing, the check ride was unsatisfactory. The DPE stated that if there is a question whether a landing was firm and caused any damage; the flight school's policy would be to have maintenance perform a check.

The aircraft was taxied in the ramp area. The debrief was performed on the student and appropriate paperwork completed.

Maintenance removed the cowling screws. The chief of maintenance stated that there was no damage to the tube portion of the strut and then viewed a bend in the attachment of the nose strut to the lowest portion of the firewall. He stated that it was light damage and that 43 hours of student instruction had been performed prior to that observed flight. He stated no hard landings had been reported by students prior, yet he could not say the damage was performed on the observed flight as the maintenance department had not viewed the aircraft internally for the previous 43 hours.

The observed ride was debriefed, and the FLM for the FSDO was notified of possible damage to the aircraft.

Julie R. Orrick

Will Rogers Flight Standards District Office