

Record of Conversation

Wednesday, May 28, 2014 1:38 PM

Interview:	Tom Archer
Phone:	[REDACTED]
Location:	Telephone conversation

Narrative:

The following is a summary of conversation with Mr. Tom Archer, who was the pilot of the accident helicopter.

Mr Archer stated that the takeoff was normal. He first lifted into a hover and the hover was good. As he began forward flight the helicopter began to feel funny, and as he got into translational lift it got really bad. The helicopter was shaking violently and seemed to get worse and worse. He attempted to slow down to land but as he slowed the helicopter rolled right and impacted the ground. The whole event took 3-4 seconds. The tail hit the ground first. The only thing he felt through the controls were the vibrations. There was no control stiffness or uncommanded movement that he recalls. The wind was calm, there was a flag pole right in front of him and the flag was limp, the dust rose up around the helicopter and did not dissipate quickly.

Mr Archer said that the maintenance that had just been done on the helo was a 25-hour involving fluid change, repacking of some hanger bearings, and that the tail rotor gearbox had been r&r'd.

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Additional phone conversation with Mr Archer.

Mr Archer stated that he didn't think the cg (center of gravity) was an issue. The hopper tank was empty and he'd flown the helicopter in this configuration many times, and this is the configuration he uses to do the cherry drying operation.

He did expand on the accident event a bit more. He stated that the initial hover felt normal, and he increased the altitude of the hover to get out of the dust cloud. He felt the vertical vibration (1:1 vibe) as he transitioned forward. He had felt this type of vibe before such a doing descent after crossing ridgeline, but as he continued forward (expecting the vibe to dissipate) the vibe increased in severity such that he was being thrown against his shoulder straps in extreme fashion. He attempted to land, but the helicopter rolled right on him and impacted the ground.

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