

N23UP 30JUN2025

I met the aircraft owner, Richard Gauron, at Helicopters Northwest KBFI at noon. The purpose of the flight was to go have a meeting at Auburn airport (a 15 minute flight south). When I am not working as a professional helicopter pilot in Alaska I occasionally fly with Richard as a safety pilot. I had reviewed the weather earlier that day and noted excellent conditions and forecast for flying that day.

I conducted a preflight inspection of the aircraft and all mechanicals, skins, structures, fluids, etc. were normal. We then got in the machine and the owner went through the prestart/start checklists and started the machine. I got the ATIS information and requested a "Bus Barn" VFR departure. The airport was using north flow. The tower cleared us to depart.

The owner picked up the helicopter and hovered it towards the Bravo taxiway and began his takeoff. The machine felt unstable in pitch and to a lesser extent yaw and roll.. This happened very fast. I was guarding the controls as I tend to during pickups and set-downs and verbalized "I've got the controls" and attempted to stabilize the aircraft and immediately felt the skids contact the pavement. I added power and initiated a climb. I also asked the tower to return to Spot 8 via left closed traffic. I flew a short pattern and shallow approach. I did not know the extent of the airframe damage but knew the helicopter needed to be on the ramp and fully examined. I don't recall the aircraft handling poorly during the short period I was flying it.