

REPORT

AAIU Report No.: 2003/003

AAIU File No.: 2002/0049

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Aircraft Type and Registration:	Augusta A 109E, EI-SQG
No. and Type of Engines:	Two, Pratt and Whitney 206C
Aircraft Serial Number:	11084
Year of Manufacture:	2000
Operator:	Premier Helicopters Ltd
Date and Time (UTC):	25 September 2002, 0930 hours
Location:	Spawell Leisure Centre, Dublin 6
Type of Flight:	Public Transport
Persons on Board:	Pilot – One Passenger – Three
Injuries:	Pilot – None Passenger – None
Nature of Damage:	Serious damage to main rotor blades
Commanders Licence:	ATPL
Commanders Age:	44 years
Commanders Flying Experience:	5308 hours (of which 45 were on type)
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot and further AAIU enquiries

1. FACTUAL INFORMATION

The pilot landed at Spawell Leisure Centre, Templeogue, Dublin 6, in order to collect his passengers for onward transit to Listowel, Co. Kerry. Potential landing sites at this centre included a large car-park, a golf driving range and a par 3 golf course. The pilot elected to land on the golf course as he was concerned about grit and small stones on the adjacent car park surface.

With the passengers on board, the pilot took off to a hover and air taxied his aircraft backwards in order to maximise the length of his take off run. During this manoeuvre the four main rotors struck near the top of a large conifer tree, approximately 15 feet high, a number of which are planted about this golf course. The tail rotor was undamaged as it went abeam the tree and did not touch it.

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The pilot, who felt vibrations through his controls, landed immediately and shut down the aircraft. Both he and his passengers exited the aircraft without delay. The pilot said that he did not see the tree which was to the left rear of his aircraft. He occupied the right hand seat.

2. OTHER INFORMATION

An AAIU Inspector ascertained on a visit to Spawell that there are approximately a dozen landings/take-offs yearly at the Centre, mostly from the car park area. In the event of a serious accident the Centre would rely on the attendance of their nearest Fire Brigade Unit, at Tallaght station. The Centre itself has no trained personnel or externally located fire fighting equipment to act as an immediate response to a more serious helicopter accident, nor is this a requirement in the context of the Centre's normal day to day operations.

3. DAMAGE

The four main rotor blades were extensively damaged (see photo). The helicopter's dynamic components also required an inspection as a result of the MR blade impact.

4. SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

The Operator should examine the general suitability of landing locations used by its helicopters for public transport operations. (SR 4 of 2003)



DISMANTLED MAIN ROTOR BLADES