

AAIU Report No.2001-009
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Aircraft Type and Registration:	Robinson R22 Beta, EI-CFX
No. and Type of Engines:	One, Lycoming 0-320-B2C
Aircraft Serial Number:	0793
Year of Manufacture:	1988
Date and Time (UTC):	11 April 2001, 1414 hours
Location:	Weston Aerodrome, Co. Kildare
Type of Flight:	Private (Training)
Persons on Board:	Crew – two
Injuries:	Crew – none
Nature of Damage:	Tail boom severed following strike by main rotor blade
Commanders Licence:	Commercial Pilot’s Licence (Helicopter)
Commanders Age:	40 years
Commanders Flying Experience:	1685 hours, all types
Information Source:	Watch Manager, Dublin Airport. AAIU Report Form submitted by pilot

HISTORY OF THE FLIGHT

The pilot under instruction, who is the holder of a PPL (H), booked a flight with the Operator that day and had requested an instructor to complete some refresher training in autorotations. The weather was good with a light variable surface wind of 5 kt.

The instructor selected the north grassy area of Weston Aerodrome for the exercise and commenced with rapid decelerations (quick stops) in preparation for the practice autorotations (with power recovery). The first approach to the selected landing spot, the intersection of Runway 18-36 and 12-30, was greatly extended due to the calm winds and so a go around was carried out at approximately 300 ft. The second approach was successful.

The third approach was on target for the intersection area when both pilots noticed that another helicopter had landed in their target area and had its rotors running. The instructor then advised his pupil to continue, expecting the helicopter on the ground to lift off on its next circuit. However, it remained in position so the instructor advised his pupil to carry out some S-turns to select a new landing spot away from the other helicopter.

At the end of the approach the pupil flared the helicopter excessively, causing total airspeed loss and the aircraft to sink vertically. The instructor took control to assist in the recovery but the aircraft bounced slightly on ground impact, resulting in both forward and aft pitch movements. A loud bang was heard and some other noise also.

The instructor shut down the engine and applied the main rotor brake. Both pilots exited the aircraft. There were no injuries sustained.

AAIU examination of the helicopter showed that the tail boom had been struck and severed by the main rotor.

