

Follow-up Action on Occurrence Report

ACCIDENT TO BELL 206B JET RANGER III, G-BTFY, AT CUDHAM, KENT ON 17 JANUARY 2003
(HELICOPTER CRASHED IN POOR WEATHER)

CAA FACTOR NUMBER : F4/2004
FACTOR PUBLICATION DATE : 12 January 2004
OPERATOR : Private
CAA OCCURRENCE NUMBER : 2003/00253
AAIB REPORT : Bulletin 12/2003

SYNOPSIS

(From AAIB Report)

The pilot, a part-time flying instructor, planned to collect the helicopter from Biggin Hill Airport, Kent and fly it to Southend, Essex. The weather for the departure from Biggin Hill was generally poor with low cloud and reduced visibility in rain. The pilot's stated intention was to depart to the north-east, but after initially departing on an easterly track the helicopter turned toward the south. Witnesses in an area about one and a half miles east-south-east of Biggin Hill saw the helicopter disappear from view into cloud and later reappear in a steep descent and strike the ground. Both occupants were killed on impact. An engineering examination of the helicopter revealed no defects that could have caused the accident. The investigation concluded that the accident was probably a result of the pilot's spatial disorientation brought on by inadvertent entry into cloud.

FOLLOW UP ACTION

The three Safety Recommendations, made by the AAIB following their investigation, are reproduced below, together with the CAA's responses.

Recommendation 2003-110

It is recommended that, the CAA place visibility, and consider placing cloudbase, minima on VFR helicopter cross country flights to be undertaken by PPL (Helicopter) holders.

CAA Response

The CAA accepts this Recommendation.

The CAA will take action to require flights by UK PPL (Helicopter) Licence holders to be conducted in conditions not less than specified minimum visibilities unless the licence holder has an instrument rating. The CAA will table the subject for consideration by the Small Helicopter Action Group, a joint CAA/Industry working group, at its meeting on 22 January 2004.

CAA Status - Open

Recommendation 2003-111

It is recommended that, the CAA take action to amend the ANO to forbid flying in IMC on IFR flights in Class D, E, F or G airspace by UK PPL (Helicopters) holders unless they hold an instrument rating.

CAA Response

The CAA partially accepts this Recommendation.

The CAA will not take action to amend the ANO. However, the CAA will take action to require flights by UK PPL (Helicopter) Licence holders to be conducted in conditions not less than specified minimum visibilities unless the licence holder has an instrument rating. The CAA will table the subject for consideration by the Small Helicopter Action Group, a joint CAA/Industry working group, at its meeting on 22 January 2004.

CAA Status - Open

Recommendation 2003-112

It is recommended that, the CAA carry out a review of all regulations, training and educational material, relating to flights by PPL (Helicopter) holders in poor weather conditions, to ensure that they are consistent, easily assimilated and clearly presented.

CAA Response

The CAA partially accepts this Recommendation.

The CAA will carry out a review of all regulations, training and educational material that it produces, relating to flights by PPL (Helicopter) holders in poor weather conditions, to ensure that they are consistent, easily assimilated and clearly presented.

Also, the CAA will table the subject for consideration by the Small Helicopter Action Group, a joint CAA/Industry working group, at its meeting on 22 January 2004.

CAA Status - Open