

Follow-up Action on Occurrence Report

**ACCIDENT TO AGUSTA A109E, G-PWER, 1NM EAST OF BOURNEMOUTH AIRPORT ON 3 MARCH 2004
(HELICOPTER CRASH DURING VISUAL APPROACH TO AIRPORT)**

CAA FACTOR NUMBER : F28/2005
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OPERATOR : Red Aviation
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AAIB REPORT : Bulletin 6/2005

SYNOPSIS

(From AAIB Report)

The pilot was flying a visual approach to Bournemouth Airport in poor weather at night; radar data indicated that the aircraft was tracking the extended centreline of Runway 26 at between 800 to 1,000 feet amsl. The pilot declared that he was visual with the airport but, shortly afterwards, the radar data indicated that the aircraft had entered a turn to the left. The aircraft turned through about 540° before striking the ground, fatally injuring both the pilot and the passenger. The pilot had probably become disorientated, and his limited instrument flying background did not equip him to cope with degraded visual environment. There was no evidence from the wreckage recovered of any mechanical failure or unauthorised interference with the aircraft or its systems that may have contributed to the accident.

FOLLOW UP ACTION

The one Safety Recommendation, made by the AAIB following their investigation, is reproduced below, together with the CAA's response.

Recommendation 2005-55

The Civil Aviation Authority should review the Rules of the Air and relevant regulations in their applicability to helicopters and should consider imposing minimum visibility requirements for day and night. These minima should afford an effective safety margin to prevent inadvertent flight in instrument meteorological condition or loss of adequate external visual references. The requirement for a clearly defined horizon, particularly over water or featureless terrain should also be considered.

CAA Response

The CAA accepts this Recommendation.

The CAA has prepared a draft Regulatory Impact Assessment and consultation commenced in February 2005, with a view to setting minimum visibility requirements for all flights conducted by visual reference, whether by day under Visual Flight Rules (VFR) or under the provisions for visual reference flight contained in the Instrument Flight Rules (IFR).

In July 2000 the CAA commissioned research into the nature of the visual cue environments necessary for helicopter pilots to conduct flights safely by visual reference. The results of this research are intended to assist in formulating guidance material to underpin the revised regulatory proposals that will be made in this area. In this context the CAA is considering precisely how to define the adequacy of visual cues required to obviate the hazards associated with flight, for example over water or unlit onshore areas at night. The CAA will also amend Article 49 of the Air Navigation Order 2005 to provide that a flight must not be continued unless the weather at the destination, or an alternate, is likely to be suitable for making an approach and landing. This latter amendment is expected to enter into force early in 2006.

CAA Status - Closed