

Schweizer 300C, G-BXUP

AAIB Bulletin No: 12/99

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Category: 2.3

Aircraft Type and Registration: Schweizer 300C, G-BXUP

No & Type of Engines: 1 Lycoming HIO-360-D1A piston engine

Year of Manufacture: 1988

Date & Time (UTC): 21 September 1999 at 1330 hrs

Location: Shoreham Airport, West Sussex

Type of Flight: Private (Training)

Persons on Board: Crew - 1 - Passengers - None

Injuries: Crew - None - Passengers - N/A

Nature of Damage: Substantial

Commander's Licence: Private Pilot's Licence (Aeroplanes)

Commander's Age: 53 years

Commander's Flying Experience: 150 hours (of which 22 were on type)

Last 90 days - 22 hours

Last 28 days - 22 hours

Information Source: Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot

The pilot was carrying out a solo training flight as part of a course for the issue of a Private Pilot's Licence (Helicopters). The pilot reported that he had been carrying out hovering exercises at the eastern helicopter training area 'Echo'. He had been practicing for 20 minutes when he planned to execute a slow 180° turn to the left in order to complete the turn heading downwind, then to execute a turn to the right through 90°. The first turn was carried out successfully, but on commencement of the right turn, the helicopter suddenly yawed further to the right and pitched nose down.

The pilot assumed that this was the effect of a wind gust. He attempted to regain a steady hover but this resulted in overcontrolling of the helicopter such that it yawed in the opposite direction and pitched up. The pilot became disorientated by the movements and decided to attempt to climb in order to allow more room to regain control. He recalled that at one stage, full left yaw pedal had been applied to stop the yaw, but this was effective only after a seemingly long delay.

With the helicopter only partially under control, the pilot decided to attempt to gain some forward speed and fly out of the hover. By this time, the yawing had stopped and the helicopter was

crossing the perimeter road at the eastern end of the airfield, heading towards the river embankment. The pilot could not recall the next events, which resulted in the helicopter hitting the ground just short of the river bank.

The helicopter came to rest on its left side and the pilot was able to switch off the fuel and electrics before vacating through the right side door.

The pilot noted that he had previously flown in stronger wind conditions during his training course. He assessed that the cause of this accident was his surprise and inexperience when the helicopter was affected by the wind gust, which resulted in overcontrolling and pilot induced oscillations.

The pilot reported that the surface wind at the time was from 220° at 15 kt.