

Summary of telephone conversation on 1/24/02 between Mary Pat Baxter, ASI, DCA FSDO and Juan Rivera, airman applicant and Airport Manager, Manassas Airport.

When asked about the events concerning the damage to the R-22, N1964J on 1/20/02 during his checkride, Mr. Rivera explained that he did the oral, did preflight and then one of the first things Dave Carter did during the flight was to chop power. Mr. Rivera said he didn't react as quickly as he should have, technique wasn't there but he guessed it was enough to get by. They did the rest of the checkride items, at no point did he feel that the helicopter was operating differently.

Came back in after the checkride, Dave issued new certificate, one of the instructors said something was cracked on the helicopter, Mr. Rivera was on his way out to dinner and didn't really have a chance to look at it. He didn't feel it was really bad.

This occurred on Taxiway E, East side of field. They had been cleared from the ramp to B via E.

He didn't feel he should have reported this. Had done maneuver before and made similar hard landings.

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Summary of telephone conversation on 1/24/02 between Mary Pat Baxter, ASI, DCA FSDO and Dave Carter, pilot examiner.

Dave was conducting a checkride on 1/20/02 in N1964J, an R-22, at Manassas Airport. The applicant was Juan Rivera and the purpose of the test was to add an additional category rating, rotorcraft, to Mr. Rivera's private pilot certificate.

Dave said that he started the ride by doing a simulated engine failure from a hover, the applicant pushed the collective forward instead of back and landed hard. They did the rest of the test, everything was good, Dave then retested on the engine failure and the applicant did o.k. Dave issued certificate with rotorcraft rating.

When asked if he knew there was damage, Dave said he did not, nor did he do a thorough inspection afterward, it didn't feel that hard.

Dave said that a CFI afterwards said that spot had been welded previously.

I asked Dave if he considered calling us. He said, yes, he did, but after reading 830 it looked like it was a non-reportable event, it was the landing gear and it had been previously welded.

Summary of telephone conversation on 2/1/02 between Mary Pat Baxter, ASI, DCA FSDO and Simon Ayling, helicopter CFI.

Mr. Ayling was a witness to the R-22, N1964J, hard landing on Jan. 20, 2002. He saw the helicopter lift from the helipad, taxi toward B and E taxiways. They were hovering high, about a 5-6 foot hover. Turned onto E, about 40 yards from him. He heard the engine sound change abruptly, throttle was cut very quickly. His heart skipped a beat, he didn't think it was a practice autorotation, he thought it was real because of the abruptness of the power cut. He didn't see the height they were actually at but it was higher than what was prudent. He looked up, the nose was yawed about 5 degrees right coming down left skid low. It hit hard on the left skid. For a second he thought it would flip to the left because of the angle, speed and the way it came down on the left side. At that point he swore—he thought it was real, it then bounced back to the right skid. He commented to another instructor “Did you see that? That was hard!”. He then realized that it was part of the test when they brought the throttle back in. After he commented to the other instructor about the severity of this, the other instructor said it must be all right because they're still continuing the test.

Mr. Ayling said he felt this was not prudent to do this maneuver from the height at which it was done, or doing something like that so quickly into the test not knowing the skill level of the applicant.

After the examiner and applicant came back in, and applicant passed, Mr. Ayling sent his student out to preflight. He then went to join him and could see the damage to the helicopter from about 30 yards. He said he did notice a weld on the frame where the damage was.

Mr. Ayling went back inside to the flight school and called the examiner, Mr. Dave Carter, aside and told him about the damage. Mr. Ayling asked Mr. Carter about reporting the damage and stated that Mr. Carter said “No, that's only the landing gear, it doesn't count”. Mr. Ayling said that Mr. Carter did not look at the damage or go back out to the helicopter but left by the back stairs. Mr. Carter called Mr. Ayling about a half hour later and asked him about his experience with autorotations and how often he practiced them. Mr. Ayling said he felt this was in response to his comment to Mr. Carter's wife about the dramatic autorotation.

Mr. Ayling did not speak to Mr. Rivera about the damage but did talk to him about the liability issue and who was PIC. Also talked to him about how it might have been previously repaired.

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