



RECORD OF PHONE CONVERSATION

Eric M. Gutierrez
Aviation Accident Investigator
Eastern Region Area

Date: February 20, 2020
Person Contacted: Jeffery J. Gray (Flight Instructor)
NTSB Accident Number: ERA20CA106

Narrative:

The following is a synopsis of the information provided by Mr. Jeffery J. Gray in a telephone conversation.

On February 18, 2020, at about 1555 EST, he and Matthew Bonin, an airplane rated pilot, were returning from a training flight to the (KVDF) Tampa Executive Airport in Tampa, Florida. The helicopter was established on the right downwind for runway 18, at about 1000 feet AGL and traveling at about 80 knots. With Mr. Bonin at the flight controls, Mr. Gray directed him to conduct an autorotation with a 180° turn, followed with a power recovery. Abeam the departure end of runway 18, Mr. Gray moved the throttle lever from the FLY position to IDLE. While conducting the maneuver, Mr. Bonin overshot the runway and aligned the helicopter with the parallel taxiway. Upon realizing the unacceptable position, they elected to abort the maneuver and perform a go-around. While Mr. Bonin continued to fly the helicopter, Mr. Gray inadvertently moved the throttle lever from IDLE, aft, towards the OFF position, then forward, to the Fly position. While this was occurring, Mr. Bonin applied collective pitch and realized the engine had lost all power. He stated he "did not have any engine power". Mr. Gray tried to adjust the throttle to restart the engine to no avail. Passing through 200 feet AGL, Mr. Bonin requested that Mr. Gray assist him on the controls. Mr. Gray realized they had no engine power and were forced to conduct a power-off autorotation. Concerned the main rotor blades may impact the tail boom, he did not apply very much aft cyclic control, and elected to accept a longer ground run on the taxiway. The helicopter landed on the taxiway, skidded about 180 feet, departed the taxiway and came to rest in a drainage ditch.

According to the flight instructor there were no preimpact mechanical failures or malfunctions with the airframe or engine that would have precluded normal operation.