

I am the chief pilot and the only full-time flight instructor of Sirius Flying LLC. I also currently hold a designation with the San Jose FSDO as a pilot examiner of airplanes and helicopters.

I have flown with Lisa Corsetti for 43.8 hours as her primary flight instructor. Our first dual flight was June 19, 2010. Our last dual flight was March 3, 2012.

Prior to endorsing her for solo flight, I thoroughly trained her as required by FAR 61.87 (a), (b), (c), and (f). I also trained her as required by SFAR 73 paragraph 2 (a) (3) and by SFAR 73 paragraph 2 (b) (3). The last includes flight training in (i) enhanced training in autorotation procedures (ii) engine rotor RPM control without the use of governor and (iii) low rotor RPM recognition and recovery.

During her training, on several occasions, Ms Corsetti exhibited a tendency to grip the throttle control tightly enough to over-ride the governor. When this would happen, if she were to lower the collective, the correlator would lower the engine RPM. When she lowered the collective sufficiently, the engine and rotor RPM would be reduced below 97%. At that point, the low RPM horn and light would activate.

During early training Ms Corsetti's initial reaction was inappropriate in that she would not release her grip on the throttle; and I would be required to intercede and roll the throttle control open to normal operating RPM. In time she learned to relax her tight grip when it became obvious that she was over-riding the governor.

During her later pre-solo training, Ms Corsetti seemed to understand her problem and would react appropriately by relaxing her grip when the low RPM warning activated due to her un-intentional over-riding the governor. However, she did not completely eliminate the occasional overly tight throttle grip, especially when she encountered stressful situations. It was my belief, though, that she had learned to correct the problem when it occurred.

If the NTSB finds that there was no fault in the power-plant of Robinson N290SH, an alternate possibility might be that Ms Corsetti caused low RPM by gripping the throttle too tightly while lowering the collective to reduce altitude in preparation for the base turn. Instead of relaxing her grip, she might have responded to the low RPM warning as a perceived engine failure by lowering the collective full down without releasing or opening the throttle control. This would cause a large decrease in engine RPM because the correlator would close the throttle. She had been trained to execute an autorotative approach and landing in the event of power failure.

I was not in the aircraft when the crash occurred. However, the panic reaction to a pilot-induced low-RPM that I have described seems plausible to me. It might explain the autorotation that led to the crash-landing.

Other possibilities, which I consider less likely, are engine failure due to carburetor icing or inadvertent pulling of the mixture control to idle cut-off.

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