



SOUTH AFRICAN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY

ACCIDENT REPORT – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Date of Accident	11 May 2001	Time of Accident	1515 Z		
Aircraft Registration	ZS-RLT	Type of Aircraft	Robinson R-44		
Pilot-in-command Licence Type	Private		Licence Valid	Yes	
Pilot-in-command Flying Experience	Total Flying Hours	59.8	Total Hours on Type	19.4	
Type of Operation	Private				
Last point of departure	FAGM				
Next point of intended landing	Mkuze (Near Pongola, Kwazulu Natal)				
Location of the accident site with reference to easily defined geographical points (plus GPS readings if possible)					
Taxiway Mkuze aerodrome					
Meteorological Information	CAVOK				
Number of people on board	1+2	No. of people injured	Nil	No. of people killed	Nil
Synopsis	<p>The private pilot was accompanied by his wife and child on a private flight from FAGM to Mkuze Falls Game Lodge and departed FAGM at approximately 1200 Z. The pilot landed at Mkuze aerodrome at approximately 1430 Z to refuel the helicopter before continuing towards Mkuze Falls Game Lodge.</p> <p>After refueling and at approximately 1500 Z, the pilot commenced with the start-up and went through the start-up checklist while parked on the taxiway adjacent to runway 17/35. One of the items on the checklist is the low rpm warning system, which requires the pilot to lift the collective lever slightly while rolling off the throttle to be certain that the low rpm warning is functioning correctly.</p> <p>It was during this procedure that the helicopter inadvertently became airborne and started to rotate to the left. The pilot attempted to keep the helicopter in the hover instead of landing back and further raised the collective lever. The tail-boom contacted the ground and a portion of it was severed by the main rotors. The helicopter came to rest on its right-hand side.</p> <p>Although the helicopter was extensively damaged in the process, none of the occupants or any of the bystanders were injured.</p>				
Probable Cause					
The helicopter inadvertently became airborne while the pilot was testing the low-rpm warning system and lifted the collective lever without rolling off the throttle sufficiently.					