

FEBRUARY ACCIDENT REPORT
by Jim Timm

In this regular reporting of aviation accidents that have occurred in Arizona, it is hoped that we may be able to learn from mistakes being made and be able to prevent similar accidents from occurring in the future. The past few months, the reports contained far too many fatal accidents without answers. I hope we have become more aware and careful in the decision making process as this month's report contains only two accidents reported by the NTSB. In one case the pilot sustained serious injuries during a hard landing after an engine failure and in the other case the pilot was uninjured after losing control and departing the runway during takeoff.

The following information was taken from the preliminary reports that have been issued by the NTSB and contain only the initial information available and are subject to change and may contain errors. Any errors in these preliminary NTSB reports will be corrected when the more detailed final report has been completed, which in some cases may be almost a year or more later.

Accident Date; Wednesday, November 9, 2011 (Reported 1/10/12)
Title 14 CFR Part 91 Operation
Location; San Carlos
Aircraft; Casler Scott CX-4
Injuries; 1 Uninjured

During takeoff, the tailwheel equipped airplane experienced a gust of wind from the left and the pilot was able to correct for it. As the takeoff roll continued the airplane encountered another gust from the left and despite the pilot's control inputs, he was unable to maintain control and the aircraft exited the right side of the runway and impacted trees adjacent to the runway, resulting in structural damage to the fuselage. The pilot reported no pre-impact mechanical malfunctions or failures with the aircraft that would have precluded normal operation.

Accident Date; Wednesday, December 14, 2012 (Reported 1/10/12)
Title 14 CFR Part 91 Operation
Location; Tucson
Aircraft; Robinson Helicopter R22 BETA
Injuries; 1 Serious

The helicopter, operated by Raytheon Missile Systems, Tucson, had departed Tucson International airport (TUS) and was maneuvering about 1.5 miles southwest of the airport. After an engine failure, the commercial pilot entered an auto rotative descent that terminated in a hard touchdown. The pilot was seriously injured and the helicopter was substantially damaged.

The pilot was in radio contact with a ground based participant in the testing of a Raytheon ground based system when the pilot was tasked to descend to within a few hundred feet of the ground, and while performing this maneuver, the pilot broadcast the statement to the TUS local air traffic controller: "Engine failure, Velocity one engine failure". There was no further communication with the pilot.

A few minutes later, the helicopter wreckage was found in an open field on Raytheon property. The helicopter was resting on it's side, the helicopter's bubble and skids were broken, the belly was crushed upward, the main rotor blades were bent and the tail boom was severed. There was no fire.