Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Taylor, Texas	**Accident Number:**	CEN25LA302
Date & Time:	August 3, 2025, 12:22 Local	**Registration:**	N4684S
Aircraft:	ROBINSON HELICOPTER R22 BETA	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Defining Event:	Loss of control in flight	**Injuries:**	1 Minor, 1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Instructional		

Analysis

During the instructional flight, the flight instructor demonstrated each flight control to the student pilot at an altitude of 1 to 4 ft above the ground, and then allowed the student pilot to manipulate one flight control at a time. The student pilot manipulated the cyclic control several times with no issue but later allowed a slow drift to occur, which moved the helicopter away from its initial ground reference point. The flight instructor then took the flight controls and returned the helicopter to the reference point. During the student pilot's last attempt at manipulating the cyclic control, the helicopter drifted to a dirt area, descended, and its skid contacted the ground. The helicopter rolled over and impacted terrain resulting in substantial damage to the fuselage, main rotor, and main rotor gearbox. The flight instructor stated he was too slow to take the controls from the student pilot, which resulted in the helicopter's impact with terrain. The flight instructor stated there was no mechanical malfunction/failure of the helicopter that would have precluded normal operation.

The Helicopter Instructor's Handbook, FAA-H-8083-4, states in part, "…beginning the flight instruction at altitude is a good way to allow the student to manipulate all of the controls at one time and with a larger margin of error than beginning the flight instruction at a hover."

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

The flight instructor’s inadequate supervision and delayed remedial action which resulted in a skid contacting the terrain. Contributing to the accident was the flight instructor’s improper judgement to allow the student pilot to manipulate the flight controls at a low altitude/hover.

Findings

Personnel issues	Monitoring other person - Instructor/check pilot
Personnel issues	Delayed action - Instructor/check pilot
Personnel issues	Decision making/judgment - Instructor/check pilot
Personnel issues	Aircraft control - Instructor/check pilot
Aircraft	(general) - Not attained/maintained

Factual Information

History of Flight

Maneuvering-low-alt flying	Loss of control in flight (Defining event)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial; Flight instructor	**Age:**	29,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	**Seat Occupied:**	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	**Restraint Used:**	3-point
Instrument Rating(s):	Helicopter	**Second Pilot Present:**	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	Helicopter; Instrument helicopter	**Toxicology Performed:**	
Medical Certification:	Class 2 With waivers/limitations	**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	June 28, 2025
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	November 30, 2024
Flight Time:	710 hours (Total, all aircraft), 228 hours (Total, this make and model), 279 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 31 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 19 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Student pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	**Age:**	68,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	**Seat Occupied:**	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	**Restraint Used:**	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	**Second Pilot Present:**	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	None	**Toxicology Performed:**	
Medical Certification:		**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	
Occupational Pilot:	No	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 2000 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	ROBINSON HELICOPTER	**Registration:**	N4684S
Model/Series:	R22 BETA	**Aircraft Category:**	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:	1999	**Amateur Built:**	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	**Serial Number:**	2996
Landing Gear Type:	None; Skid	**Seats:**	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	July 10, 2025 Annual	**Certified Max Gross Wt.:**	1370 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		**Engines:**	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	4936 Hrs at time of accident	**Engine Manufacturer:**	LYCOMING
ELT:	Installed	**Engine Model/Series:**	O-360-J2A
Registered Owner:	On file	**Rated Power:**	145 Horsepower
Operator:	On file	**Operating Certificate(s) Held:**	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	**Condition of Light:**	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	T74,600 ft msl	**Distance from Accident Site:**	0.15 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	12:15 Local	**Direction from Accident Site:**	250°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	**Visibility**	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	**Visibility (RVR):**	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	7 knots /	**Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:**	None / None
Wind Direction:	90°	**Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:**	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	30.07 inches Hg	**Temperature/Dew Point:**	33°C / 22°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Taylor, TX (T74)	**Type of Flight Plan Filed:**	None
Destination:	Taylor, TX (T74)	**Type of Clearance:**	None
Departure Time:	11:15 Local	**Type of Airspace:**	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	Taylor Municipal Airport T74	**Runway Surface Type:**	Asphalt;Concrete
Airport Elevation:	600 ft msl	**Runway Surface Condition:**	
Runway Used:	17	**IFR Approach:**	None
Runway Length/Width:	4000 ft / 75 ft	**VFR Approach/Landing:**	None

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor, 1 None	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		**Aircraft Fire:**	None
Ground Injuries:		**Aircraft Explosion:**	None
Total Injuries:	1 Minor, 1 None	**Latitude, Longitude:**	30.572639,-97.443194(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Gallo, Mitchell
Additional Participating Persons:	Federal Aviation Administration, San Antonio FSDO; San Antonio, TX
Original Publish Date:	September 18, 2025
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 4
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=200693