Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Pecos, Texas	**Accident Number:**	CEN25LA237
Date & Time:	July 4, 2025, 11:30 Local	**Registration:**	N992TP
Aircraft:	ROBINSON HELICOPTER COMPANY R44 II	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Defining Event:	Loss of control in flight	**Injuries:**	1 Serious, 1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The student helicopter pilot stated that during a personal flight, he and a pilot departed the airport, flew to a ranch and returned. The pilot did not hold a flight instructor certificate. Upon return, they flew to the airport fuel facility to obtain fuel. A witness stated that the student pilot told him he was manipulating the flight controls at the time of the accident during a hover taxi and due to gusty wind conditions and not being comfortable, he transferred the flight controls to the pilot. The student pilot stated as the helicopter nearly touched down in front of the fuel facility, a big gust of wind, presumably a whirlwind, shot the helicopter straight up about 20-25 ft, and the helicopter did a quick 360° turn and rolled left before it came crashing down. The helicopter sustained substantial damage to the tail rotor, fuselage, and main rotor. The student pilot stated there were no mechanical malfunctions or failures of the helicopter that would have precluded normal operation.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

The pilot's failure to maintain aircraft control during gusty wind conditions.

Findings

Personnel issues	Aircraft control - Pilot
Aircraft	(general) - Not attained/maintained
Personnel issues	Decision making/judgment - Pilot

Factual Information

History of Flight

Maneuvering-hover	Loss of control in flight (Defining event)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	**Age:**	73,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	**Seat Occupied:**	Left
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Helicopter	**Restraint Used:**	Unknown
Instrument Rating(s):	None	**Second Pilot Present:**	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	None	**Toxicology Performed:**	
Medical Certification:	Class 3 With waivers/limitations	**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	February 1, 2019
Occupational Pilot:	No	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	October 10, 2017
Flight Time:	(Estimated)		

Student pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	**Age:**	52,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	**Seat Occupied:**	Right
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	**Restraint Used:**	Unknown
Instrument Rating(s):	None	**Second Pilot Present:**	Yes
Instructor Rating(s):	None	**Toxicology Performed:**	
Medical Certification:	Class 3 With waivers/limitations	**Last FAA Medical Exam:**	July 3, 2025
Occupational Pilot:	No	**Last Flight Review or Equivalent:**	February 7, 2019
Flight Time:	209 hours (Total, all aircraft), 31 hours (Total, this make and model), 103 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 31 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 6 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 3 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	ROBINSON HELICOPTER COMPANY	**Registration:**	N992TP
Model/Series:	R44 II	**Aircraft Category:**	Helicopter
Year of Manufacture:	2017	**Amateur Built:**	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	**Serial Number:**	14089
Landing Gear Type:	None; Skid	**Seats:**	4
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	April 15, 2025 Annual	**Certified Max Gross Wt.:**	2500 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		**Engines:**	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:	664.03 Hrs as of last inspection	**Engine Manufacturer:**	Lycoming Engines
ELT:	C91 installed	**Engine Model/Series:**	IO-540-AE1A5
Registered Owner:	On file	**Rated Power:**	235 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:	E01,2615 ft msl	**Distance from Accident Site:**	33 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	10:55 Local	**Direction from Accident Site:**	69°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	**Visibility**	9 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	**Visibility (RVR):**	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	3 knots /	**Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:**	None / None
Wind Direction:		**Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:**	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:		**Temperature/Dew Point:**	28°C / 23°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Pecos, TX (PEQ)	**Type of Flight Plan Filed:**	None
Destination:	Pecos, TX (PEQ)	**Type of Clearance:**	None
Departure Time:	08:30 Local	**Type of Airspace:**	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:	Pecos Municipal Airport PEQ	**Runway Surface Type:**	
Airport Elevation:	2613 ft msl	**Runway Surface Condition:**	Dry
Runway Used:		**IFR Approach:**	None
Runway Length/Width:		**VFR Approach/Landing:**	Full stop

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious, 1 None	**Aircraft Damage:**	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:		**Aircraft Fire:**	None
Ground Injuries:		**Aircraft Explosion:**	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious, 1 None	**Latitude, Longitude:**	31.382389,-103.51072(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Gallo, Mitchell
Additional Participating Persons:	Jason Wilson; Federal Aviation Administration, Lubbock FSDO; Lubbock, TX
Original Publish Date:	October 9, 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=200475