

Safety Notice SN-38

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PRACTICE AUTOROTATIONS CAUSE MANY TRAINING ACCIDENTS

Practice autorotations continue to be the number one cause of helicopter training accidents. Many of these accidents occur because the instructor fails to take decisive action.

Instructors should always perform the following “100 Foot Decision Check”:

- 1) Rotor RPM approximately 100%
- 2) Stabilized airspeed between 60 and 70 KIAS
- 3) Stabilized rate of descent, usually less than 1500 ft/min.
- 4) Turns (if any) completed

Prior to descending below 100 feet AGL, the instructor must make the decision to take the flight controls and make an immediate power recovery if any of the above parameters is not correct. Do not attempt to salvage the situation by coaching the student or trying to correct below 100 feet AGL. At density altitudes above 4000 feet, increase the decision check to 200 feet AGL or higher.

If the decision to continue is made, the instructor should announce “100 Foot Check complete, continue”.

A high percentage of training accidents occur after many consecutive autorotations. To maintain instructor focus and minimize student fatigue, limit practice to no more than 3 or 4 consecutive autorotations.

The purpose of the practice autorotation is to teach control and maneuvering during the glide, proper use of the flare, and the power recovery (or landing). While simulated power failure/forced landing practice may involve more abrupt power reduction, practice autorotation entries should be accomplished smoothly and slowly in accordance with the Robinson Flight Training Guide.