

**SOUTH AFRICAN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY****ACCIDENT REPORT – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

<b>Aircraft Registration</b>	ZS-HUH	<b>Date of Accident</b>	4/5/2003	<b>Time of Accident</b>	1345Z
<b>Type of Aircraft</b>	ROBINSON R-22 BETA		<b>Type of Operation</b>	Private	
<b>Pilot-in-command License Type</b>	Private	<b>Age</b>	29	<b>License Valid</b>	Yes
<b>Pilot-in-command Flying Experience</b>	Total Flying Hours	170.0	Hours on Type	153.0	
<b>Last point of departure</b>	Newcastle (FANC)				
<b>Next point of intended landing</b>	Grand Central (FAGC)				
<b>Location of the accident site with reference to easily defined geographical points (GPS readings if possible)</b>					
14.6km North East of Vrede					
<b>Meteorological Information</b>	Fine: Wind - 345°/Strong Gusting, Temperature + 24°C				
<b>Number of people on board</b>	1 + 1	<b>No. of people injured</b>	None	<b>No. of people killed</b>	None

**Synopsis**

The pilot, accompanied by his wife, departed from Grand Central airport at approximately 0938Z on Saturday morning, 3 May 2003, for a private flight to Durban. The following morning they commenced their return journey from Durban to Grand Central with a refuelling stop at Newcastle, where the aircraft was refuelled to capacity. They departed Newcastle at approximately 1200Z. After flying for nearly an hour with strong head winds at 6 500 feet, the pilot decided to land as the flying was tiresome.

He identified a quiet piece of farmland with no visible livestock or residences. He approached into wind, which was gusting from the north. The aircraft was brought into the hover with the skids approximately 4 feet above the ground. It was then turned to the right out of wind (crosswind) and the pilot proceeded with the hover taxi to a more suitable landing area. In an attempt to identify a more suitable landing area the aircraft was positioned in such a way that the strong gusting wind was now from the rear (downwind, tailwind component).

According to the pilot he then experienced the "aircraft sinking", whereupon he increased the collective pitch lever to reduce the descent. At this stage the low rotor RPM warning light illuminated and the audio warning sounded. In an attempt to recover from the low rotor rpm condition he lowered the collective pitch lever, and the aircraft continued to descend rapidly. The right skid impacted the ground and the nose tipped forward, with the aircraft pivoting around that point it rolled-over and was facing in the direction from which they approached (into wind). Both occupants escaped from the wreckage with minor cuts and bruises.

**Probable Cause**

The pilot attempted a downwind landing, during strong gusty wind conditions. He experienced a loss of translational lift, which caused the right skid gear assembly to make contact with the ground, followed by a subsequent rollover.