

Aviation Safety Investigation Report 198903857

Gyrocopter

12 August 1989

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NOTE: All air safety occurrences reported to the ATSB are categorised and recorded. For a detailed explanation on Category definitions please refer to the ATSB website at www.atsb.gov.au.

Occurrence Number: 198903857 **Occurrence Type:** Accident
Location: Deeral (16 km N of Babinda) QLD
Date: 12 August 1989 **Time:** 1100
Highest Injury Level: Fatal
Injuries:

	Fatal	Serious	Minor	None
Crew	1	0	0	0
Ground	0	0	0	-
Passenger	0	0	0	0
Total	1	0	0	0

Aircraft Details: Gyrocopter
Registration: N/A
Serial Number: N/A
Operation Type: Sport Aviation
Damage Level: Substantial
Departure Point: Deeral QLD
Departure Time: 1100
Destination: Deeral QLD

Approved for Release: 28th February 1990

Circumstances:

The pilot had owned the gyrocopter for some time, but had flown it infrequently due to engine tuning problems. On previous flights, the pilot had flown from a larger strip near Innisfail. Since then, he had enhanced the engine instrument cluster to better monitor the performance of the turbocharged engine. The pilot's intention was to test the new instrument installation at the smaller Deeral strip before proceeding to the larger strip for further flying practice. He had planned to make six runs along the 500 metre long strip without becoming airborne, with a 15 knot crosswind. On the fifth run, the witness noticed that full power was applied for much longer than on the previous runs. The aircraft accelerated to flying speed and became airborne. At a height of about six feet above the strip, the pilot appeared to experience some difficulty with the cross-wind. The gyrocopter banked and yawed to the right, it then dived into the ground, and cartwheeled forward before coming to rest in a drain.

Significant Factors:

The following factors were considered relevant to the development of the accident

1. The pilot was inexperienced.
2. The wind conditions were unsuitable for the operation attempted by the pilot.
3. The pilot lost control of the aircraft due to crosswind and turbulence.

Reccomendations:

In this accident the pilot may not have been injured as seriously if he had been using a harness which prevented him from sliding forward underneath and out of the harness. A five or six point harness with a crotch strap would have held the pilot in his seat where the surrounding structure would have offered more protection.

1. It is recommended that the Sport Rotorcraft Association of Australia should disseminate information to its members on the advantages of using seat belts with additional mounting points.