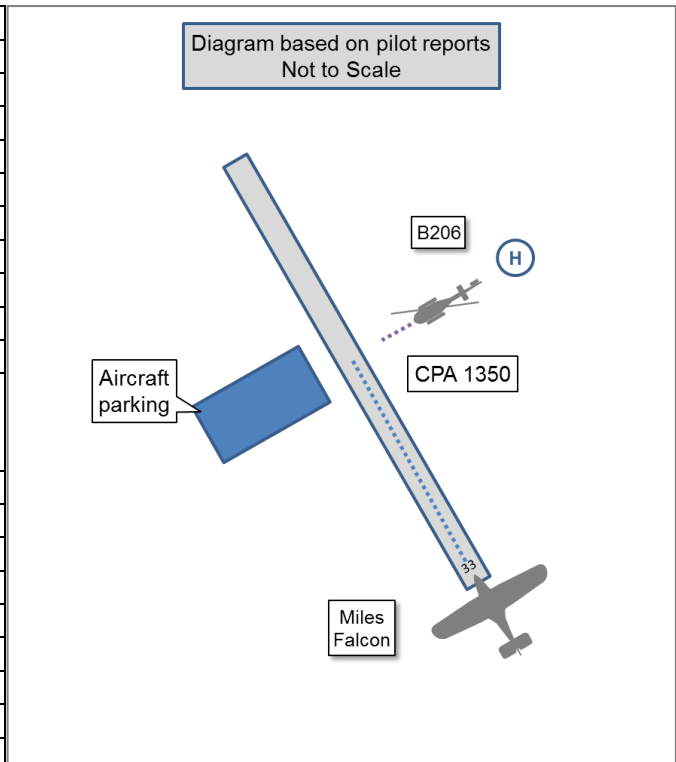


AIRPROX REPORT No 2015016

Date: 21 Feb 2015 Time: 1350Z Position: 5237N 00102W Location: Leicester aerodrome (Saturday)

PART A: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION REPORTED TO UKAB

Recorded	Aircraft 1	Aircraft 2
Aircraft	Miles Falcon	B206
Operator	Civ Pte	Civ Comm
Airspace	ATZ	ATZ
Class	G	G
Rules	VFR	VFR
Service	Air/Ground	Air/Ground
Provider	Leicester	Leicester
Transponder	A,C,S	A,C,S
Reported		
Colour	White/Blue	White
Lighting	NK	Position, HISL, anti collision
Conditions	VMC	VMC
Visibility	10Km	NK
Altitude/FL	Surface	5ft
Altimeter	NK	QFE
Heading	330°	NK
Speed	40kt	15kt
ACAS/TAS	Not fitted	Not fitted
Separation		
Reported	0ft V/15m H	0ft V/15m H
Recorded	NK	



THE MILES FALCON PILOT reports that RW33 was in use at Leicester. He commented that it was rarely used as a runway but was regularly used as a taxiway that was crossed extensively by helicopter traffic proceeding to the helicopter manoeuvring area in the middle of the aerodrome. He back-tracked RW33 and advised the ‘Tower’ of his impending departure from RW33 ‘hard’, which was acknowledged. He noticed a helicopter in a low hover approximately halfway down the runway, on the grass area, about 100m away. He began his take-off roll and was approximately halfway towards the midpoint when he heard the helicopter pilot report ‘return to parking’ which was acknowledged. He then saw the helicopter dip its nose and commence a taxi towards RW33. Because he had already reached take-off speed he considered that there was no avoiding action available to him. He reported that, instead, he transmitted a ‘Stop’ warning which, he thought, had the desired effect of stopping the helicopter some 15m from the runway.

He assessed the risk of collision as ‘High’.

THE BELL 206 (B206) JETRANGER PILOT reports making an approach to the grass strip to the north of RW33. He then called ‘hover taxi to parking’ which was acknowledged by the ‘Tower’. He did not recall initially seeing an aircraft on the runway, nor did he recall hearing any radio calls. He continued hover taxiing. After seeing the departing aircraft, which was rolling along RW33, he stopped his hover taxi some 15m short of the runway.

He assessed the risk of collision as ‘None’.

THE HELICOPTER OPERATING COMPANY CHIEF PILOT/SAFETY MANAGER reports that although he did not consider there was a risk of collision on this occasion, it did highlight the potential

for one in future. The item will be discussed at the next pilot and instructor meeting, and promulgated as a memo to Company pilots.

Factual Background

The East Midlands, Wittering and Birmingham weather was recorded as follows:

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METAR EGNX 211350Z 28014KT 9999 SCT030 06/00 Q1000
METAR EGXT 211350Z AUTO 29014KT 9999 FEW027/// 05/00 Q0999
METAR EGBB 211350Z 31015KT 9999 BKN027TCU 05/M01 Q1001
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The Leicester Aerodrome Traffic Zone (ATZ), Class G airspace, is a circle, 2nm radius, centred on the longest runway 10/28, from surface to 2000ft aal. Elevation is 469ft. The aerodrome operates with an Air Ground Communication service only. CAP 413, the UK Radiotelephony Manual, states¹:

‘An Air Ground Communication Services (AGCS) radio station operator is not necessarily able to view any part of the aerodrome or surrounding airspace. Traffic information provided by an AGCS radio station operator is therefore based primarily on reports made by other pilots. Information provided by an AGCS radio station operator may be used to assist a pilot in making decisions, however, the safe conduct of the flight remains the pilot’s responsibility’.

Analysis and Investigation

UKAB Secretariat

Both pilots shared an equal responsibility for not flying into such proximity as to create a collision hazard². The B206 pilot, who was taxiing on the manoeuvring area of the airfield, was required to give way to the Falcon which was taking off³, which he did.

Summary

An Airprox was reported when a Miles Falcon and a B206 flew into proximity within the Class G airspace of the Leicester ATZ. Both pilots were operating under VFR in VMC, in receipt of an A/G Service. The B206 pilot was hover-taxiing back to his base, which involved crossing the runway in use. He observed the departing Falcon at a late stage and stopped short of the runway.

PART B: SUMMARY OF THE BOARD’S DISCUSSIONS

Information available included reports from both pilots.

The Board first discussed the actions of the B206 pilot. The Board noted that the pilot had reported that he had not seen the Falcon taking off on RW33 when he had started to hover-taxi back to his base; a manoeuvre that had required crossing the runway. The Board also noted that the Falcon pilot had reported that he had informed the Air/Ground Operator that he had been about to depart RW33 and had received an acknowledgement. However, it was evident to the Board that the B206 pilot did not recall hearing any radio calls. The Board was aware that not only were Air/Ground operators not able to give any instructions, but also they were not required to be in a position to be able to see the aerodrome manoeuvring area or airspace. Consequently, the main benefit for pilots transmitting their details when operating under an A/G service was to let other pilots know their intentions. On this occasion it was unfortunate that the B206 pilot had not heard the Falcon pilot report that he had been about to depart. On a positive note, the Board noted that the Falcon pilot had heard the B206 pilot report hover-taxiing back to base, and this had alerted him to the potential conflict. He had transmitted ‘stop’ to the B206 but, unfortunately, its pilot did not report that he had

¹ Chapter 4, Paragraph 4.138.

² SERA 3205, Proximity.

³ SERA 3210 Right of Way, Paragraph 5, Taking off.

heard this transmission either. The Board could not determine why the B206 pilot had heard neither transmission.

In the event the B206 pilot had seen the Falcon departing, albeit at a late stage, and had stopped 15m before the runway; they considered this to be the very limit of what might be considered a suitable distance given that the rotor-blade diameter would have been considerably closer to the runway. In this respect, the Board noted that the Falcon pilot had reported that RW33 was only rarely used as a runway and several Board members who had operated from Leicester confirmed that, in their experience, it was an unusual runway to use. Consequently, the Board wondered whether the B206 pilot had become used to it not being used, and had therefore not made robust efforts to observe any traffic that might be operating from RW33 because of this.

The Board unanimously decided that the cause of the Airprox was that the B206 pilot had air-taxed into conflict with the Miles Falcon. Some members thought that this had been a very close call wherein safety margins had been much reduced below the norm (a Category B incident). Others thought that the B206 pilot had taken effective and timely action in stopping 15m short of the runway and therefore any risk of collision had been averted. In the end, after a prolonged debate, the latter argument won the day and, consequently, the Airprox was categorised as risk Category C.

PART C: ASSESSMENT OF CAUSE AND RISK

Cause: The B206 pilot air-taxed into conflict with the Miles Falcon.

Degree of Risk: C.