

Safety Notice SN-27

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SURPRISE THROTTLE CHOPS CAN BE DEADLY

Many flight instructors do not know how to give a student a simulated power failure safely. They may have learned how to respond to a throttle chop themselves, but they haven't learned how to prepare a student for a simulated power failure or how to handle a situation where the student's reactions are unexpected. The student may freeze on the controls, push the wrong pedal, raise instead of lower the collective, or just do nothing. The instructor must be prepared to handle any unexpected student reaction.

Before giving a simulated power failure, carefully prepare your student and be sure you have flown together enough to establish that critical understanding and communication between instructor and student. Go through the exercise together a number of times until the student's reactions are both correct and predictable. Never truly surprise the student. Tell him you are going to give him a simulated power failure a few minutes before, and when you roll off the throttle, loudly announce "power failure". The manifold pressure should be less than 21 inches and the throttle should be rolled off smoothly, never "chopped". Follow through on all controls and tighten the muscles in your right leg to prevent the student from pushing the wrong pedal if he becomes confused. And always assume that you will be required to complete the autorotation entry yourself. Never wait to see what the student does. Plan to initiate the recovery within one second, regardless of the student's reaction.

There have been instances when the engine has quit during simulated engine failures. As a precaution, always perform the simulated engine failure within glide distance of a smooth open area where you are certain you could complete a safe touch-down autorotation should it become necessary. Also, never practice simulated power failures until the engine is thoroughly warmed up. Wait until you have been flying for at least 15 to 20 minutes.