



LIMITED OCCURRENCE INVESTIGATION REPORT – FINAL

Reference Number		CA18/2/3/10602						
Classification	Accident			Date	3 September 2025		Time	0655Z
Type of Operation	Private (Part 94)							
Location								
Place of Departure		Rand Airport (FAGM), Gauteng Province		Place of Intended Landing		Tedderfield Airfield (Airpark) (FATA), Gauteng Province		
Place of Occurrence		Rand Airport (FAGM), Gauteng Province						
GPS Co-ordinates		Latitude	26° 14' 31" S	Longitude	28° 09' 05" E	Elevation	5 483 ft	
Aircraft Information								
Registration		ZS-WTA						
Make; Model; S/N		Morovan; Z-526F (Serial Number: 1275)						
Damage to Aircraft		Substantial			Total Aircraft Hours		4244.9	
Pilot-in-command								
Licence Type		Private Pilot Licence (PPL)		Gender		Male	Age	50
Licence Valid		Yes	Total Hours		134.6	Total Hours on Type		12.6
Total Hours 30 Days		3		Total Flying on Type Past 90 Days			3	
People On-board		1+1	Injuries		0	Fatalities		0
						Other (on ground)		0
What Happened								
<p>On Wednesday morning, 3 September 2025, a pilot and a passenger on-board a Morovan Z-526F aircraft with registration ZS-WTA intended to conduct a private flight from Rand Airport (FAGM) to Tedderfield Airfield (FATA), both in Gauteng province. Visual meteorological conditions (VMC) by day prevailed at the time of the flight which was conducted under the provisions of Part 94 of the Civil Aviation Regulations (CAR) 2011, as amended.</p> <p>The pilot reported that he conducted a pre-flight inspection of the aircraft with no anomalies noted. Later, he boarded the aircraft and started the engine. All the engine indications were within the green arc (normal) in accordance with (IAW) the Pilot's Operating Handbook (POH). The pilot further reported that he taxied the aircraft to the holding point of Runway 29 and completed the engine run-up checks. Thereafter, the air traffic control (ATC) officer cleared the aircraft for take-off. The pilot opened the throttle to maximum power and commenced with the take-off run. During the take-off run, about 100 metres (m) from the runway threshold and after the tail section had lifted off from the ground, the main landing gears retracted. The fuselage impacted the runway surface and the aircraft skidded on its underbelly; it came to rest on the right side of the runway, approximately 100m from the edge.</p>								

The pilot and the passenger evacuated the aircraft; they were not injured. The aircraft sustained substantial damage to the propeller blades and the underbelly. The airport fire and rescue personnel were dispatched to the accident scene.



Figure 1: The approximate area where the aircraft came to a stop on the runway. (Source: Google Earth)



Figure 2: The aircraft at the accident. (Source: Pilot)

Post-accident examination of the aircraft revealed that the engine was producing maximum power at the time of the accident. The landing gear switch was found in the retracted position which suggested that the landing gear switch was selected up. The position of the gear switch during the pre-flight inspection was not confirmed by the pilot, which resulted in the downlocks releasing (unlocking) as the aircraft gained momentum and rotated during take-off.



Figure 3: Scrape and propeller blades marks on the runway surface. (Source: Pilot)



Figure 4: The cockpit instrument panel showing the gear switch in “up” position under the guard cover (yellow arrow). (Source: Operator)

Figure 4 (picture) was taken immediately after the accident by the passenger as he disembarked from the aircraft; the operator shared the picture with the investigating team post-accident.

Landing Gear Description (Source: Pilot's Operating Handbook)

The Morovan Z-526F is equipped with a conventional tailwheel and electrically operated retractable main landing gear housed within the wings. Before landing, the pilot activates the landing-gear control switch located in the cockpit, which commands the main wheels to extend downward from their retracted position. As the gear deploys, cockpit indicator lights provide confirmation of status, with a green indication showing the landing gear is fully down and locked, while red indications remain present whenever the gear is retracted. Once extended, the oleo-pneumatic shock struts are positioned to absorb landing forces during touchdown, reducing transmitted loads to the airframe. After touchdown, hydraulic wheel brakes fitted to the main landing gear allow the pilot to maintain directional control and bring the aircraft to a safe stop. The system is designed so that, even when retracted, a portion of the wheels protrudes below the wing surface to limit damage in the event of a landing without gear deployment.

Findings

1. Pilot

- 1.1. The pilot had a Private Pilot Licence (PPL) that was initially issued by the Regulator (SACAA) on 22 October 2025 with an expiry date of 31 October 2027. The pilot's Class 2 aviation medical certificate was issued on 9 September 2025 with an expiry date of 30 September 2026.
- 1.2. The pilot had a total of 134.6 hours of which 12.6 hours were accumulated on the aircraft type.
- 1.3. The pilot flew the aircraft type for 3 hours past 90 days. His flight record showed that he flew a different aircraft type (Sling 4) which is equipped with a fixed landing gear. This could have caused him to omit to check the landing gear switch which was under a guard cover due to his lack of recency on the aircraft type.

2. Aircraft

- 2.1. The latest annual inspection of the aircraft was conducted and certified on 17 April 2025 at 4244 hours after which a Certificate of Release to Service (CRS) was issued with an expiry date of 31 March 2026 or at 4344 hours, whichever comes first.
- 2.2. The aircraft had a valid Authority-to-Fly (ATF) Certificate that was issued by the Regulator on 8 May 2025 with an expiry date of 31 March 2026. The aircraft's Certificate of Registration (C of R) was issued to the current owner on 6 December 2017.

2.3. The approved person (AP) who maintained the aircraft had an AP Certificate that was issued on 15 July 2025 with an expiry date of 14 July 2027.
3. <u>Environment</u>
3.1. Clear weather conditions prevailed at the time of the flight; the weather conditions did not contribute to this accident.
Probable Cause(s)
The main landing gears collapsed during the take-off run due to the landing gear switch that was selected up (retracted position). This caused the landing gear down locks to unlock during take-off.
Contributing Factor(s)
Poor airmanship.
Safety Action(s)
None.
Safety Message and/or Safety Recommendation/s
None.
About this Report
<i>The decision to conduct a limited investigation is based on factors including whether the cause is known and the evidence supporting the cause is clear, the level of safety benefit likely to be obtained from an investigation and that will determine the scope of an investigation. For this occurrence, a limited investigation has been conducted, and the Accident and Incident Investigations Division (AIID) has relied on the information submitted by the affected person/s and organisation/s to compile this limited report. The report has been compiled using information supplied in the initial notification, as well as from follow-up desk top enquiries to bring awareness of potential safety issues to the industry in respect of this occurrence, as well as possible safety action/s that the industry might want to consider in preventing a recurrence of a similar occurrence.</i>
<i>All times given in this report are Co-ordinated Universal Time (UTC) and will be denoted by (Z). South African Standard Time is UTC plus 2 hours.</i>
Purpose
<i>In terms of Regulation 12.03.1 of the Civil Aviation Regulations (CAR) 2011 and ICAO Annex 13, this report was compiled in the interest of the promotion of aviation safety and the reduction of the risk of aviation accidents or incidents and not to apportion blame or liability.</i>
Disclaimer
<i>This report is produced without prejudice to the rights of the AIID, which are reserved.</i>

This report is issued by:

**Accident and Incident Investigations Division
South African Civil Aviation Authority
Republic of South Africa**