



LIMITED OCCURRENCE INVESTIGATION REPORT – FINAL

Reference Number	CA18/3/2/1491						
Classification	Serious Incident		Date	07 August 2025		Time	1020Z
Type of Operation	Private (Part 94)						
Location							
Place of Departure	Morningstar Airfield, Western Cape Province		Place of Intended Landing		Altona Airstrip near Klipheuwel, Western Cape Province		
Place of Occurrence	Altona Airstrip near Klipheuwel, Western Cape Province						
GPS Co-ordinates	Latitude	33°42'27.9" S	Longitude	18°38'46.1" E	Elevation	1 899.61 ft	
Aircraft Information							
Registration	ZU-FEH						
Make; Model; S/N	Sonex; A-Model (Serial Number: 956)						
Damage to Aircraft	Minor		Total Aircraft Hours	90.1			
Pilot-in-command							
Licence Type	Private Pilot Licence (PPL)		Gender	Male		Age	45
Licence Valid	Yes	Total Hours	553.6		Total Hours on Type	48	
Total Hours 30 Days	4.4		Total Flying on Type Past 90 Days	9.2			
People On-board	1+0	Injuries	0	Fatalities	0	Other (on ground)	0
What Happened							
<p>On Thursday morning, 7 August 2025, a pilot on-board a Sonex A-Model aircraft took off on a private scenic flight from Morningstar Airfield to Altona Airstrip near Klipheuwel, both in Western Cape province. The flight was conducted under visual meteorological conditions (VMC) and in accordance with (IAW) the provisions of Part 94 of the Civil Aviation Regulations (CAR) 2011 as amended.</p> <p>The pilot stated that the aircraft took off from Runway (RWY) 02 at 1003Z with the engine power indicating 5 800 revolutions per minute (rpm). Upon arrival at Altona Airstrip, the pilot performed two low-level flyovers above the runway before determining the suitability of landing. At approximately 1012Z, the aircraft approached the runway in a north-westerly direction with the flaps selected to 30 degrees; touch down at the beginning of the runway was at an airspeed of 65 knots (kts).</p> <p>Halfway into the landing roll, the pilot spotted a brown cardboard box in the middle of the runway. Uncertain whether the cardboard box contained any objects and unable to determine its contents, the pilot made a split-second decision to steer the aircraft to the left to avoid a potential impact. During the evasive manoeuvre, the left main wheel struck a mud patch which caused the aircraft to veer off the runway. As a result, the pilot lost directional control of the aircraft; it veered off into a</p>							

canola field on the left side of the runway and came to rest with the nose section in the vegetation and the tail on the runway.

After the serious incident, the pilot shut down the engine and safely exited the aircraft; he was uninjured. A post-serious incident inspection identified minor damage to several components of the aircraft, including the right-wing tip and leading edge, nose landing gear strut, right main landing gear and propeller. The cardboard box was later examined and found to be empty. The pilot was unable to find out the person who placed it on the runway.

The serious incident occurred during daylight at Global Positioning System (GPS) co-ordinates determined to be 33°42'27.9" South 18°38'46.1" East, at an elevation of 1 899.61 feet (ft).

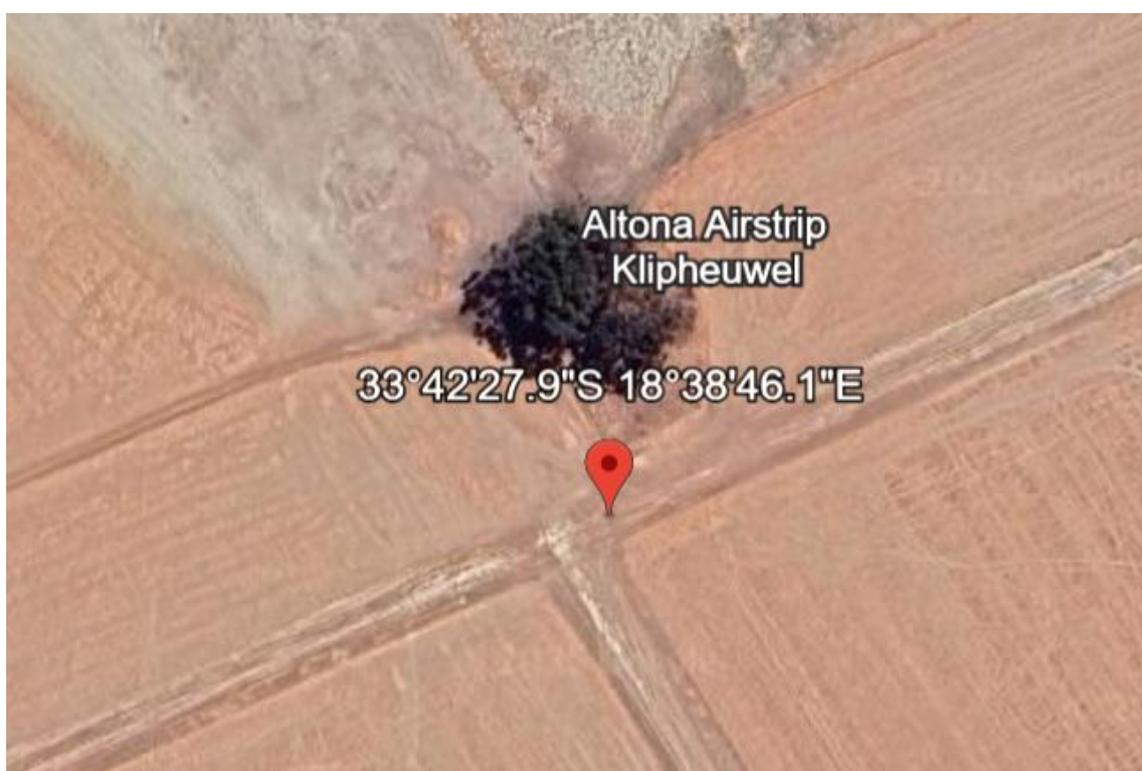


Figure 1: Aerial view of the airstrip. (Source: Google Earth)



Figure 2: The aircraft at its resting position and the cardboard box in the foreground on the runway.
(Source: Pilot)

Definition of an Obstacle (ICAO Annex 14)

Obstacle: All fixed (whether temporary or permanent) and mobile objects, or parts thereof, that:

- 1. Are located on an area intended for the surface movement of aircraft; or*
- 2. Extend above a defined surface intended to protect aircraft in-flight; or*
- 3. Stand outside those defined surfaces and have been assessed as being a hazard to air navigation.*

Definition of Foreign Object Debris (ICAO Doc 9157 - Aerodrome Design Manual, Part 6)

Foreign Object Debris (FOD) is any object, live or not, located in an inappropriate location in the airport environment that has the capacity to cause damage to aircraft or injury to personnel.

Findings

1. Personnel Information

- 1.1. The pilot had a Private Pilot Licence (PPL) that was initially issued by the Regulator (SACAA) on 9 March 2017. The licence was reissued on 6 February 2025 with an expiry date of 28 February 2027.

- 1.2. The pilot had flown a total of 553.6 hours of which 48 hours were on the aircraft type.
- 1.3. The pilot had a Class 2 aviation medical certificate that was issued on 8 October 2024 with an expiry date of 31 October 2026 with no restrictions.

2. Aircraft Information

- 2.1. The latest annual inspection of the aircraft was certified on 9 August 2024 at 55.5 total airframe hours. The aircraft had accrued 34.6 hours since the last inspection.
- 2.2. The aircraft was issued a Certificate of Release to Service (CRS) on 9 August 2024 at 55.5 airframe hours with an expiry date of 8 August 2025 or at 155.5 airframe hours, whichever occurs first.
- 2.3. The aircraft was maintained by a SACAA-approved person (AP).
- 2.4. The aircraft had a valid Authority-to-fly (ATF) Certificate that was initially issued on 28 November 2022. The latest ATF Certificate was issued on 20 November 2024 with an expiry date of 31 October 2025.
- 2.5. The aircraft's Certificate of Registration (C of R) was issued to the present owner on 13 November 2024.
- 2.6. The presence of a cardboard box on the runway prompted the pilot to take an evasive action during the landing roll which led to loss of directional control and a runway excursion.

Probable Cause(s)

Loss of directional control during the landing roll following a manoeuvre to avoid impacting a cardboard box on the runway.

Contributing Factor(s)

None.

Safety Action(s)

None.

Safety Message

None.

About this Report

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.

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.

Purpose

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.

Disclaimer

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This report is issued by:

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