

PRELIMINARY ACCIDENT REPORT

Accident and Incident Investigations Division

Accident
- Preliminary Report -
AIID Ref No: CA18/2/3/10608



Figure 1: The file picture of the ZU-PBD aircraft. (Source: Jetphotos.com)

Description:

On the morning of 15 October 2025, a pilot on-board a Sling 2 aircraft with registration ZU-PBD departed from Secunda Aerodrome (FASC) in Mpumalanga province to Margate Aerodrome (FAMG) in KwaZulu-Natal province. Shortly before ZU-PBD's departure, another aircraft registered ZU-PBC, had departed from the same aerodrome; it was also destined for FAMG. Both aircraft belonged to the same operator. Visual meteorological conditions (VMC) prevailed at the time of the flights. The two aircraft did not fly in formation.

A scheduled airline pilot relayed a MAYDAY call to the air traffic control (ATC) personnel, stating that he heard a MAYDAY call on frequency 129.1-Megahertz (MHz) (Johannesburg Area East). Both aircraft were subsequently reported missing in KwaZulu-Natal Midlands, prompting an activation of a search and rescue (SAR) operation by the Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre (ARCC) at approximately 1034Z. The ZU-PBC was located later that day, whilst the ZU-PBD remained missing. Due to poor weather conditions and fading daylight at the time, the search for ZU-PBD was suspended until the next day. On 16 October 2025 at approximately 0518Z, the ZU-PBD wreckage was discovered near Boston; the pilot was fatally injured. The accident site was handed over to the South African Police Service (SAPS). The accident occurred approximately 6.2 nautical miles (nm) from Boston at the following Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates: 29°34'13.19" S 030°0'49.31" E, at an elevation of 4 924 feet (ft).

Occurrence Details

Reference Number : CA18/2/3/10608
Occurrence Category : Accident (Category 1)
Type of Operation : Part 94 (Private)
Name of Operator : Aviation Junction
Aircraft Registration : ZU-PBD
Aircraft Make and Model : Sling 2
Nationality : South African
Place : KwaZulu-Natal, near Boston: 29°34'13.19" S 030°0'49.31" E
Date and Time : 15 October 2025 at 1020Z
Injuries : Fatal
Damage : Destroyed

Purpose of the Investigation

In terms of Regulation 12.03.1 of the Civil Aviation Regulations (CAR) 2011, 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.

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.

Investigation Process

The Accident and Incident Investigations Division (AIID) was notified of the occurrence involving a Sling 2 aircraft which occurred near Boston on 15 October 2025 at 1020Z. The occurrence was classified as an accident according to the CAR 2011 Part 12 and the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) STD Annex 13 definitions.

The AIID has appointed an investigator-in-charge to conduct a full investigation. The investigators were dispatched to the site. A notification was sent to the State of Registry, Operator, Design and Manufacturer in accordance with the CAR 2011 Part 12 and the ICAO Annex 13 Chapter 4. The States did not appoint an accredited representative and/or advisor. The AIID will lead the investigation and issue the final report of this accident in accordance with the CAR 2011 Part 12 and the ICAO Annex 13.

The information contained in this preliminary report is derived from the information gathered during the on-going investigation into the occurrence. Later, an interim or final report may contain altered information in case new evidence is found during the on-going investigation that requires changes to the information depicted in this report.

The AIID reports are made available to the public at:

<https://www.caa.co.za/industry-information/accidents-and-incidents/>

Notes:

- Whenever the following words are mentioned in this report, they shall mean the following:*
 - Accident — this investigated accident*
 - Aircraft — the Sling 2 involved in this accident*
 - Investigation — the investigation into the circumstances of this accident*
 - Pilot — the pilot involved in this accident*
 - Report — this accident report*

2. *Photos and figures used in this report were taken from different sources and may have been adjusted from the original for the sole purpose of improving clarity of the report. Modifications to images used in this report were limited to cropping, magnification, file compression; or enhancement of colour, brightness, contrast; or addition of text boxes, arrows, or lines.*

Disclaimer

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Abbreviation	Description
°	Degrees
°C	Degrees Celsius
AGL	Above Ground Level
AIID	Accident and Incident Investigations Division
AME	Aircraft Maintenance Engineer
AMO	Aircraft Maintenance Organisation
ARCC	Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre
ATCO	Air Traffic Control Officer
ATF	Authority-to-Fly
CAR	Civil Aviation Regulations
C of A	Certificate of Airworthiness
C of R	Certificate of Registration
CRS	Certificate of Release to Service
CVR	Cockpit Voice Recorder
ESC	Escarpment
EFIS	Electronic Flight Information System
FALE	King Shaka International Airport
FAMG	Margate Aerodrome
FASC	Secunda Aerodrome
FDR	Flight Data Recorder
ft	Feet
GPS	Global Positioning System
hPa	Hectopascal
IFR	Instrument Flying Rating
kt	Knots
m	Metres
METAR	Meteorological Aerodrome Report
MHz	Megahertz
MPI	Mandatory Periodic Inspection
nm	Nautical Miles
NOSIG	No Significant Change
OEM	Original Equipment Manufacturer
PIC	Pilot-in-Command
POH	Pilot's Operating Handbook
PPL	Private Pilot Licence
QNH	Barometric Pressure Adjusted to Sea Level
SACAA	South African Civil Aviation Authority
SAR	Search and Rescue
SAWS	South African Weather Service
TAF	Terminal Aerodrome Forecast
TBO	Time Between Overhaul
UTC	Universal Co-ordinated Time
VHF	Very High Frequency
VMC	Visual Meteorological Conditions
Z	Zulu (Term for Universal Co-ordinated Time - Zero Hours Greenwich)

1. FACTUAL INFORMATION

1.1. History of Flight

- 1.1.1. On Wednesday morning, 15 October 2025 at 0835Z, a pilot on-board a Sling 2 aircraft with registration ZU-PBD took off on a private flight from Secunda Aerodrome (FASC) in Mpumalanga province to Margate Aerodrome (FAMG) in KwaZulu-Natal province. The flight was conducted under visual meteorological conditions (VMC) by day and under the provisions of Part 94 of the Civil Aviation Regulations (CAR) 2011, as amended.
- 1.1.2. Another aircraft, registered ZU-PBC, which belonged to the same operator, departed from FASC a few minutes before ZU-PBD's departure. The two aircraft did not fly in formation although they were both routing to the same destination. The ZU-PBD pilot had filed a flight plan with an estimated elapsed time (EET) of 3 hours (03h00) and selected search and rescue (SAR) +1 hour with King Shaka International Airport (FALE) in KwaZulu-Natal province. *The SAR+1 means that if the aircraft has not reached its chosen (or alternate) destination in 1 hour, the search for the aircraft will be initiated. The SAR+1 is cancelled once the aircraft lands safely at the selected (or alternate) destination. If the aircraft does not cancel SAR+1 within 1 hour of estimated time of arrival, then the search for the aircraft is initiated.*
- 1.1.3. According to available information, a scheduled airline pilot relayed a MAYDAY call to the air traffic control officer (ATCO) after hearing a MAYDAY call on frequency 129.1-Megahertz (MHz) (Johannesburg Area East). The ATCO reported the call to the Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre (ARCC) and the search and rescue operation for both aircraft was started at approximately 1034Z. The MAYDAY call heard by the scheduled airline pilot was made by one of the pilots flying either a ZU-PBC or ZU-PBD aircraft.
- 1.1.4. Inclement weather conditions were reported in the Pietermaritzburg area with low clouds and fog covering the high ground. Two aircraft were reported missing in KwaZulu-Natal Midlands; the first aircraft, ZU-PBC, was successfully located on the same day. It had crashed and the pilot was fatally injured. The second aircraft, ZU-PBD, was not located until sunset; therefore, the search was suspended due to deteriorating weather conditions with the plan to continue the search at daybreak the next morning.
- 1.1.5. On Thursday morning, 16 October 2025 at approximately 0518Z, the wreckage of ZU-PBD was located near Boston in KwaZulu-Natal Midlands by members of the search and rescue team. The aircraft was destroyed during the impact sequence, and the pilot was fatally injured. The accident scene was handed over to the South African Police Service (SAPS).
- 1.1.6. The accident occurred 6.2 nautical miles (nm) north-west of Boston in instrument meteorological conditions (IMC) at Global Positioning System (GPS) co-ordinates determined to be 29°34'13.19" South 030°0'49.31" East, at an elevation of 4924 feet (ft).

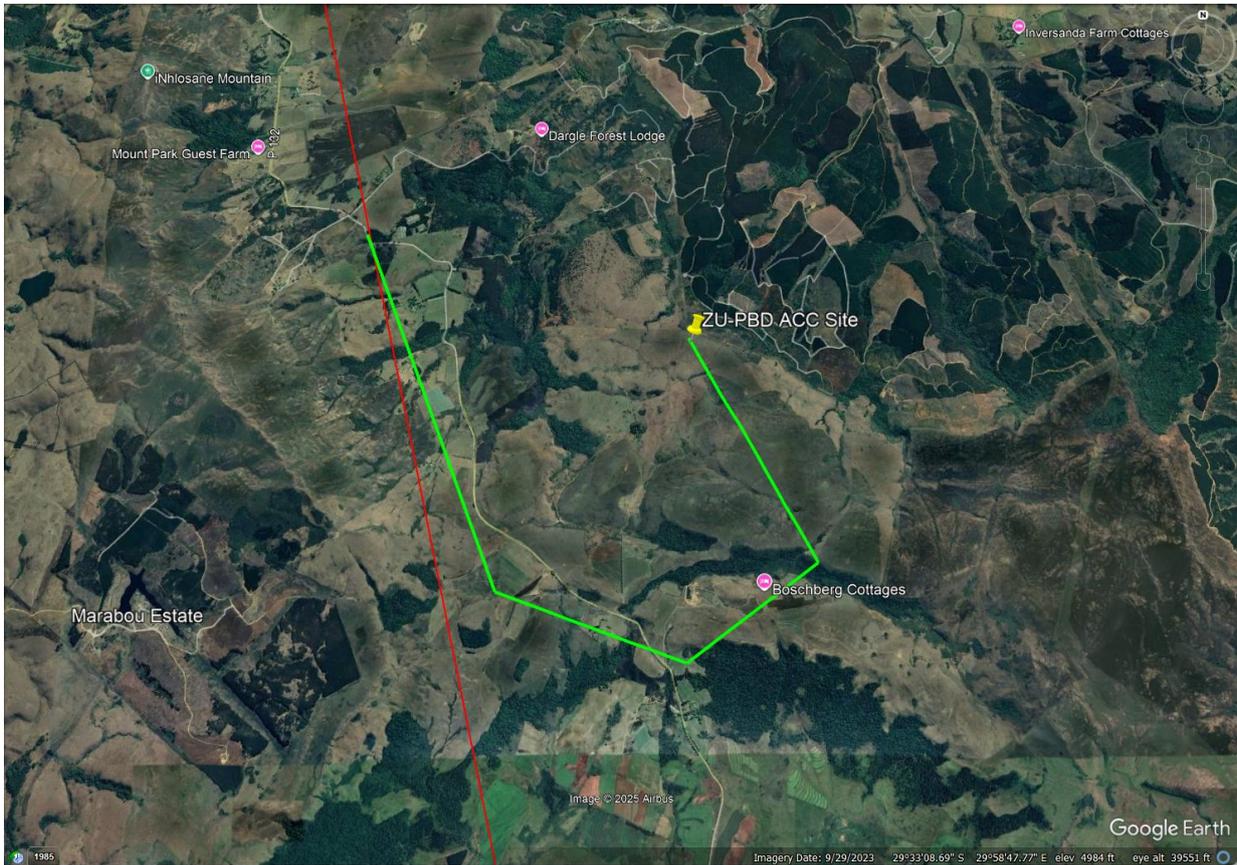


Figure 2: The accident site of ZU-PBD (red line: intended track; green line: projected track).
(Source: Google Earth)

1.2. Injuries to Persons

Injuries	Pilot	Crew	Pass.	Total On-board	Other
Fatal	1	-	-	1	-
Serious	-	-	-	-	-
Minor	-	-	-	-	-
None	-	-	-	-	-
Total	1	-	-	1	-

Note: Other means people on the ground.

1.2.1. The pilot was fatally injured.

1.3. **Damage to Aircraft**



Figure 3: The wreckage of ZU-PBD.

1.3.1. The aircraft was destroyed.

1.4. **Other Damage**

1.4.1. None.

1.5. **Personnel Information**

Nationality	Indian	Gender	Male	Age	25
Licence Type	Private Pilot Licence (PPL)				
Licence Valid	Yes	Type Endorsed	No		
Ratings	None				
Medical Expiry Date	15 May 2030				
Restrictions	Corrective Lenses				
Previous Accidents	None				

Note: Previous accidents refer to past accidents the pilot was involved in, when relevant to this accident.

Flying Experience:

Total Hours	105.2
Total Past 24 Hours	3
Total Past 7 Days	8.1
Total Past 90 Days	52.4
Total on Type Past 90 Days	22.2
Total on Type	22.2

- 1.5.1. The pilot had a Private Pilot Licence (PPL) that was initially issued on 4 June 2025 with an expiry date of 3 June 2026.
- 1.5.2. The pilot had a Class 1 medical certificate that was issued on 15 May 2025 with an expiry date of 15 May 2026 with a restriction to wear corrective lenses.
- 1.5.3. According to the pilot's logbook, he had a Sling 2 class rating endorsement that was approved by the Approved Training Organisation (ATO) on 23 September 2025. The application for the addition of the Sling 2 aircraft to the pilot's licence was not yet filed with the Regulator (SACAA) at the time of the accident flight; therefore, the pilot's licence was not endorsed with the aircraft type at the time of the flight.
- 1.5.4. The pilot had started training towards the issuance of an instrument flight rating (IFR) under the ATO prior to the accident.

1.6. **Aircraft Information**

1.6.1. Sling 2 (Source: slingaircraft.com)

The Sling 2 is a precisely engineered light sport aircraft built with a stressed-skin, semi-monocoque design using aviation-grade aluminum and Computer Numerical Control (CNC) machining. This construction ensures both structural integrity and aerodynamic efficiency, giving the aircraft a sleek, rugged appearance. Its balanced design provides smooth, responsive handling, making it a joy to fly for both novice and experienced pilots. The interior is thoughtfully arranged for ergonomic ease, while advanced Light Emitting Diode (LED) exterior lighting enhances visibility with bright, sharply defined beams. These LEDs are energy-efficient and emit minimal heat, reflecting the aircraft's modern, eco-conscious design.

Performance is driven by a 100 hp Rotax 912 Ultra-Light Sport (ULS) engine, known for its reliability, fuel efficiency and low emissions. With a 2000-hour time between overhauls and the best power-to-weight ratio in its class, the Sling 2 excels in climb performance and overall flight capability. Its 3-blade DUC FLASH propellers contribute to smooth, efficient operation. The avionics suite features Garmin's 10" G3X Touch flight display, a native touchscreen system tailored for light sport and amateur-built aircraft. This advanced interface offers intuitive controls, real-time flight data and seamless integration, enhancing situational awareness and simplifying cockpit management. Together, these elements make Sling 2 a standout in its category.

1.6.2.

Airframe:

Manufacturer/Model	The Aircraft Factory	
Serial Number	206	
Year of Manufacture	2018	
Total Airframe Hours (At Time of Accident)	1599.3	
Last Inspection (Date & Hours)	1533.05	25 March 2025
Hours Since Last Inspection	1533.05	

CRS Issue Date	26 March 2025	
ATF (Issue Date & Expiry Date)	4 April 2025	13 March 2026
C of R (Issue Date) (Present Owner)	2 January 2018	
Type of Fuel Used	95 Unleaded	
Operating Category	Private (Part 94)	
Previous Accidents	None	

Note: Previous accidents refer to past accidents the aircraft was involved in, when relevant to this accident.

Engine:

Manufacturer/Model	912 ULS (ROTAX GMBH)
Serial Number	9569369
Part Number	12587
Hours Since New	1533.05
Hours Since Overhaul	N/A

Propeller:

Manufacturer/Model	3 BLADE AIRMASTER
Serial Number	1295 2058B 2059 2060
Part Number	12597
Hours Since New	1254.0
Hours Since Overhaul	N/A

- 1.6.3. The last annual inspection of the aircraft was conducted and certified on 26 March 2025 at 1533.05 airframe hours after which a Certificate of Release to Service (CRS) was issued with an expiry date of 25 March 2026 or at 1633.5 hours, whichever comes first.
- 1.6.4. The aircraft had a valid Authority-to-Fly (ATF) Certificate that was initially issued by the Regulator on 14 March 2018. The ATF was renewed on 4 April 2025 with an expiry date of 13 March 2026. The aircraft was airworthy when it was dispatched for the flight.
- 1.6.5. The Certificate of Registration (C of R) was issued to the present owner on 2 January 2018.
- 1.6.6. The aircraft was dispatched with 150 litres of 95 Unleaded fuel (full tank) which equated to an endurance of 8 hours at cruise speed.

1.7. Meteorological Information

- 1.7.1. A detailed official weather report was requested from the South African Weather Service (SAWS). Figure 4 depicts the weather forecast of the area around the time of the accident.

KwaZulu Natal

TAF FALE 150400Z 1506/1612 18010KT 9999 OVC035 TX23/1612Z TN17/1603Z PROB30 TEMPO
 1518/1523 5000 -RA OVC015 PROB30 TEMPO 1610/1612 17017G27KT=
 TAF FAPM 150900Z 1510/1521 18005KT 7000 OVC010 TX19/1512Z TN15/1521Z PROB30 TEMPO
 1513/1518 4000 -RA OVC008 PROB30 TEMPO 1518/1521 0800 FG OVC005=

Figure 4: The requested meteorological aerodrome report. (Source: SAWS)

Wind Direction	180°	Wind Speed	5kt	Visibility	7000m
Temperature	19°C	Cloud Cover	OVC	Cloud Base	1000 ft
Dew Point	15°C	QNH	1018hPa		

1.7.2. Significant Weather Chart

Figure 5 shows the low-level chart valid for 15 October 2025 at 0900Z. Although the chart was valid for 0900Z, forecasters accommodate forecasts between 0900Z and 1200Z. Figure 5 shows a significant reduction in visibility to 4500m with drizzle and mist in the mountainous terrain escarpment (ESC) of KwaZulu-Natal; therefore, the forecast was for instrument meteorological conditions (IMC).

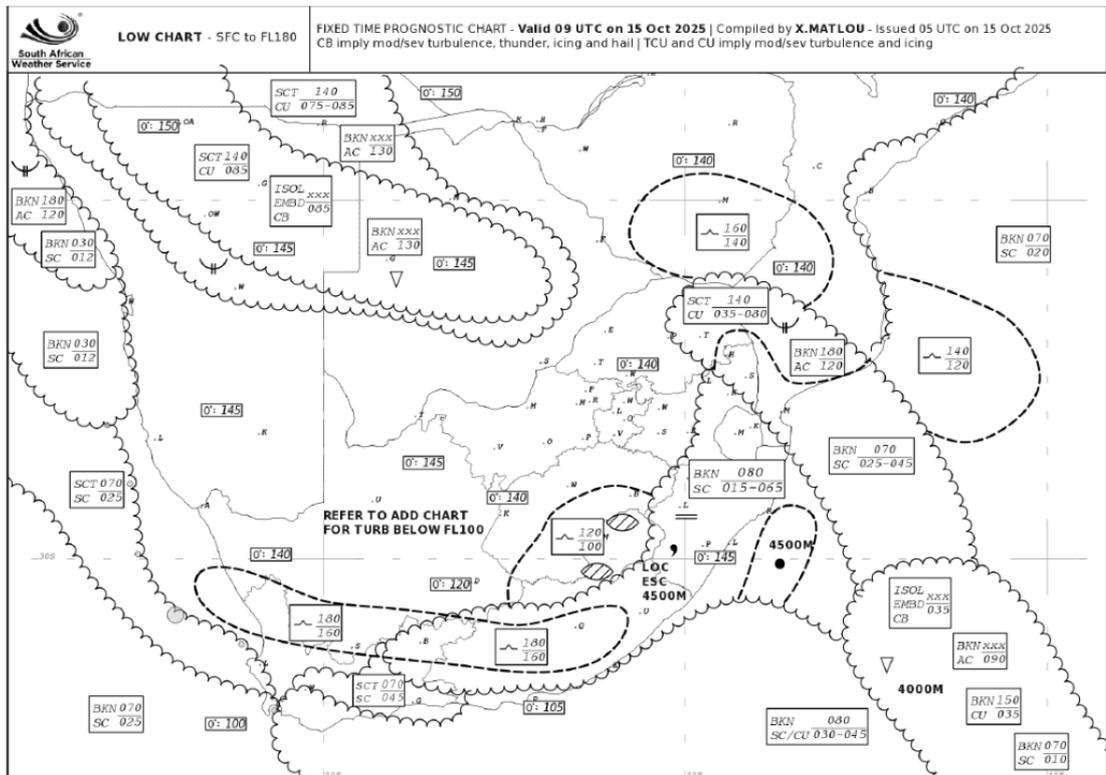


Figure 5: Low-level significant weather chart valid for 15 October 2025 at 0900Z. (Source SAWS)

1.8. Aids to Navigation

1.8.1. The aircraft was equipped with a Garmin Electronic Flight Instrument System (EFIS) navigational equipment as required by the Regulator. There were no records indicating that the navigational equipment was unserviceable prior to the flight.

1.9. Communication

1.9.1. The aircraft was equipped with a standard communication system as required by the Regulator. There were no recorded defects with the communication system prior to the flight.

1.10. Aerodrome Information

1.10.1. The accident occurred at a private farm, 6.2nm north-west of Boston.

1.11. Flight Recorders

1.11.1. The aircraft was neither equipped with a flight data recorder (FDR) or a cockpit voice recorder (CVR), nor was it required by regulation to be fitted to the aircraft type.

1.12. Wreckage and Impact Information

1.12.1. The accident occurred at 1020Z on a rocky terrain within a private farm in the Midlands, KwaZulu-Natal. Evidence at the site suggested that the aircraft impacted the ground with the left-wing down first at an approximate angle of 30 degrees. It then struck the ground with the nose, impacting and displacing large rocks as it tumbled over the rugged landscape. The sequence is indicative of a high-energy impact. The wreckage trail was saturated with spilled fuel and oil.



Figure 6: Initial impact on the ground; the yellow arrow indicates the direction of the aircraft. The inset shows the pilot's watch with the possible time of impact.



Figures 7 and 8: Wing-tip light and the pitot tube found at the initial impact point.

1.12.2. The left wing was found curled around the fuselage, indicating significant structural deformation. The right wing had remained in its original position but sustained extensive damage.



Figure 9: The main wreckage with the detached canopy and main landing gear frame.

1.12.3. The aircraft was equipped with three propellers. One of the three propellers was found 20 metres (m) from the main wreckage; the other two propellers were destroyed beyond recognition.



Figure 10: The propeller hub. Only one of the three propeller blades was recovered, the other two are missing.

1.12.4. The canopy separated from the main airframe; it was located approximately 10m from the wreckage. The glass top of the canopy was found broken with traces of damage sustained during the impact sequence. The engine sustained impact damage, and the cylinders and mount bracket were found detached from the main airframe. The EFIS screen had broken off from the instrument panel and was shattered; the data card was not recovered. The three wheels of the aircraft were not found at the site, and the main landing gear frame had separated from the airframe.



Figure 11: The canopy that separated from the fuselage.

1.13. **Medical and Pathological Information**

1.13.1. To be discussed in the final report.

1.14. **Fire**

1.14.1. There was no pre- or post-impact fire.

1.15. **Survival Aspects**

1.15.1. The accident was considered not survivable due to the high-energy impact at which the aircraft contacted the rocky ground.

1.16. **Tests and Research**

1.16.1. To be discussed in the final report.

1.17. Organisational and Management Information

1.17.1. This was a private flight operated under the provisions of Part 94 (Private) of the CAR 2011, as amended.

1.17.2. The aircraft maintenance organisation (AMO) which conducted the last maintenance inspection had an AMO Certificate that was approved by the Regulator on 19 December 2024 with an expiry date of 31 December 2025.

1.18. Additional Information

1.18.1. Class and Type Ratings (Source: SA-CAR Part 61 Subpart 9)

General

61.09.1 (1) This Subpart applies to the issuing of class ratings and type ratings and the endorsement of models or variants for the aircraft categories aeroplane and helicopter as prescribed in Document SA-CATS 61.

(2) No person may act as pilot of an aircraft, except when undergoing a skills test or receiving flight training, unless he or she—

(a) has the applicable class or type rating and the model or variant endorsed in his or her logbook and licence or file copy (as applicable); or

(b) is in possession of a temporary 30-day certificate of competency and has the logbook endorsement. The temporary certificate of competency is part of the application for class or type rating form and does not entitle a pilot to conduct international flights.

(3) For the purpose of this Subpart—

(a) aircraft in a class are referred to by manufacturer, model and variant(s) of the model.

1.18.2. Privileges and Limitations (Source SA-CAR Subpart 6)

61.03.5

(1) The holder of a PPL(A) may not exercise the privileges of that licence unless he or she—

(a) is in possession of a valid medical certificate, issued to him or her in terms of Part 67;

(b) has submitted a copy of the medical certificate to the licensing authority, as required in regulation 61.01.6 (6) in the event that the aviation medical examiner is unable to submit electronic data to the Director; and

(c) complies with the Maintenance of Competency requirements.

(2) The holder of a valid PPL(A) may, in VMC, act as PIC or co-pilot in any aeroplane for which he or she holds the appropriate valid class rating or type rating.

(3) To provide for special VFR, the holder of a PPL(A) may fly in IMC, in sight of the surface and clear of cloud, fog or mist within a control zone, after being authorized to do so by the responsible air traffic services controller.

1.18.3. Visibility and Distance from Cloud

91.06.21 (1) *Every VFR flight shall be so conducted that the aircraft is flown with visual reference to the surface by day and to identifiable objects by night and at no time above more than three eighths of cloud within a radius of 5 NM of such aircraft and*

Table 2
In Airspaces other than those specified in Table 1

Airspace class	Altitude band	Forward Flight visibility	Distance from cloud
C F G	At and above 10 000 feet above MSL	8 km	1 500 m horizontally 1 000 ft vertically
C F G	Below 10 000 feet AMSL and above 3 000 ft above MSL, or above 1 000 feet above terrain, whichever is the higher	5 km	1 500 m horizontally 1 000 ft vertically
C	At and below 3 000 feet above MSL, or 1 000 feet above terrain, whichever is the higher	5 km	1 500 m horizontally 1 000 ft vertically
F G	At and below 3 000 feet above MSL, or 1 000 feet above terrain, whichever is the higher	5 km	Clear of cloud and with the surface in sight

1.18.4. Special VFR Weather Minima (Source SA-CAR Subpart 6)

91.06.22 (1) *A PIC of an aeroplane may only conduct Special VFR operations in weather conditions below the conditions prescribed in regulation [91.06.21](#) within a control zone (CTR)—*

- (a) under the terms of air traffic control clearance;*
- (b) by day only;*
- (c) with a cloud ceiling of at least 600 ft and visibility of at least 1 500 m, measured from the aerodrome reference point;*
- (d) when the Special VFR flight will not unduly delay an IFR flight;*
- (e) if the aeroplane is equipped with two-way radio equipment capable of communicating with an ATSU on the appropriate frequency; and*
- (f) if leaving the control zone, in accordance with instructions issued by an ATSU prior to departure.*

1.19. Useful or Effective Investigation Techniques

1.19.1. None.

2. FINDINGS

2.1. General

From the available evidence, the following preliminary findings were made with respect to this accident. These shall not be read as apportioning blame or liability to any organisation or individual.

To serve the objective of this investigation, the following sections are included in the conclusions heading:

- **Findings** — are statements of all significant conditions, events, or circumstances in this accident. The findings are significant steps in this accident sequence, but they are not always causal or indicate deficiencies.

2.2. Findings

2.2.1. The pilot had a Private Pilot Licence (PPL) that was initially issued on 4 June 2025 with an expiry date of 3 June 2026. The pilot had started training towards his instrument flying rating. He had a total of 2.6 hours of instrument flying and 4.4 hours of simulator instrument flying.

2.2.2. The pilot had a total of 105.2 hours of which 22.2 hours were on the Sling 2 aircraft.

2.2.3. The pilot had a Class 1 medical certificate that was issued on 15 May 2025 with an expiry date of 15 May 2026 with a restriction to wear corrective lenses.

2.2.4. The last annual inspection of the aircraft was conducted and certified on 26 March 2025 at 1533.05 airframe hours after which a Certificate of Release to Service (CRS) was issued with an expiry date of 25 March 2026 or at 1633.5 hours, whichever comes first.

2.2.5. The aircraft had a valid Authority-to-Fly (ATF) Certificate that was initially issued by the Regulator on 14 March 2018. The ATF was renewed on 4 April 2025 with an expiry date of 13 March 2026. The aircraft was airworthy when it was dispatched for the flight.

2.2.6. The Certificate of Registration (C of R) was issued to the present owner on 2 January 2018.

2.2.7. The training school had a valid Approved Training Organisation (ATO) Certificate that was issued by the Regulator on 25 November 2022 with an expiry date of 31 January 2028.

2.2.8. The AMO which conducted maintenance of the aircraft had the AMO Certificate that was issued by the Regulator on 3 June 2025 with an expiry date of 30 June 2026.

2.2.9. The pilot contravened the CAR Part 91.06.21 which states: *“Every VFR flight shall be so conducted that the aircraft is flown with visual reference to the surface by day and to identifiable objects by night and at no time above more than three eighths of cloud within a radius of 5 NM of such aircraft and have a forward visibility of 5km and remain clear of cloud 1500 metres horizontally and 1000 feet vertically”.*

3. ON-GOING INVESTIGATION

- 3.1. The AIID investigation is on-going, and the investigator will investigate other aspects of this accident which may or may not have safety implications.

4. SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. General

The safety recommendations listed in this report are proposed according to paragraph 6.8 of Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation and are based on the conclusions listed in heading 3 of this report. The AIID expects that all safety issues identified by the investigation are addressed by the receiving States and organisations.

4.2. Safety Recommendation/s

- 4.2.1. None.

5. APPENDICES

- 5.1. None.

This report is issued by:

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