LIMITED OCCURRENCE INVESTIGATION REPORT – FINAL

Reference Number	CA18/3/2/1531						
Classification	Serious Incident	**Date**	8 February 2026		**Time**	0630Z	
Type of Operation	Private (Part 94)						
Location							
Place of Departure	Panorama Airfield, Gauteng Province	Place of Intended Landing	Parys Airfield (FAPY), Free State Province				
Place of Occurrence	Runway 20 at Panorama Airfield, Gauteng Province						
GPS Co-ordinates	Latitude	26°19'54.24" S	Longitude	28°4'2.37" E	Elevation	4 998ft	
Aircraft Information							
Registration	ZS-GYW						
Make; Model; S/N	Pipistrel; Virus 912 (Serial Number: 006V912-1299)						
Damage to Aircraft	Minor	Total Aircraft Hours	954.03				
Pilot-in-command							
Licence Type	Private Pilot Licence (PPL)	Gender	Male	Age	70		
Licence Valid	Yes	Total Hours	747	Total Hours on Type	340		
Total Hours 30 Days	0	Total Flying on Type Past 90 Days	0				
People On-board	1 + 1	**Injuries**	0	**Fatalities**	0	**Other (on ground)**	0

What Happened

On Sunday morning, 8 February 2026, a pilot and a passenger on-board a Pipistrel Virus 912 aircraft with registration ZS-GYW were engaged in a private flight from Panorama Airfield, south of Johannesburg in Gauteng province, with the intention to land at Parys Airfield (FAPY) in Free State province. The flight was conducted under visual meteorological conditions (VMC) and under the provisions of Part 94 of the Civil Aviation Regulations (CAR) 2011, as amended.

The pilot reported that a thorough pre-flight inspection of the aircraft was conducted and no anomalies were identified. The aircraft was fuelled with approximately 60 litres (L) of Mogas, which was considered sufficient for the intended flight to FAPY. The take-off was conducted from the grass surface Runway 20 with the flaps set to 15 degrees and engine power established at approximately 5 500 revolutions per minute (rpm). The aircraft became airborne within the airfield's boundaries and initiated a normal climb profile. During the initial climb whilst at an estimated height of 100 feet (ft) above ground level (AGL), the aircraft suddenly lost power. Upon recognising the critical nature of the situation at low altitude, the pilot elected to conduct an emergency landing back on Runway 20. However, due to limited altitude and reduced engine rpm, the aircraft was unable to maintain altitude and entered an uncontrolled descent. It subsequently landed hard with the right main landing gear

first. The right main landing gear strut broke but remained attached to the fuselage. Moreover, the nose gear fork twisted, damaging the fairing. Both the pilot and the passenger evacuated the aircraft uninjured.

The serious incident occurred during daylight at Global Positioning System (GPS) co-ordinates determined to be 26°19'54.24" South 28°4'2.37" East, at an elevation of 4 998 feet (ft).

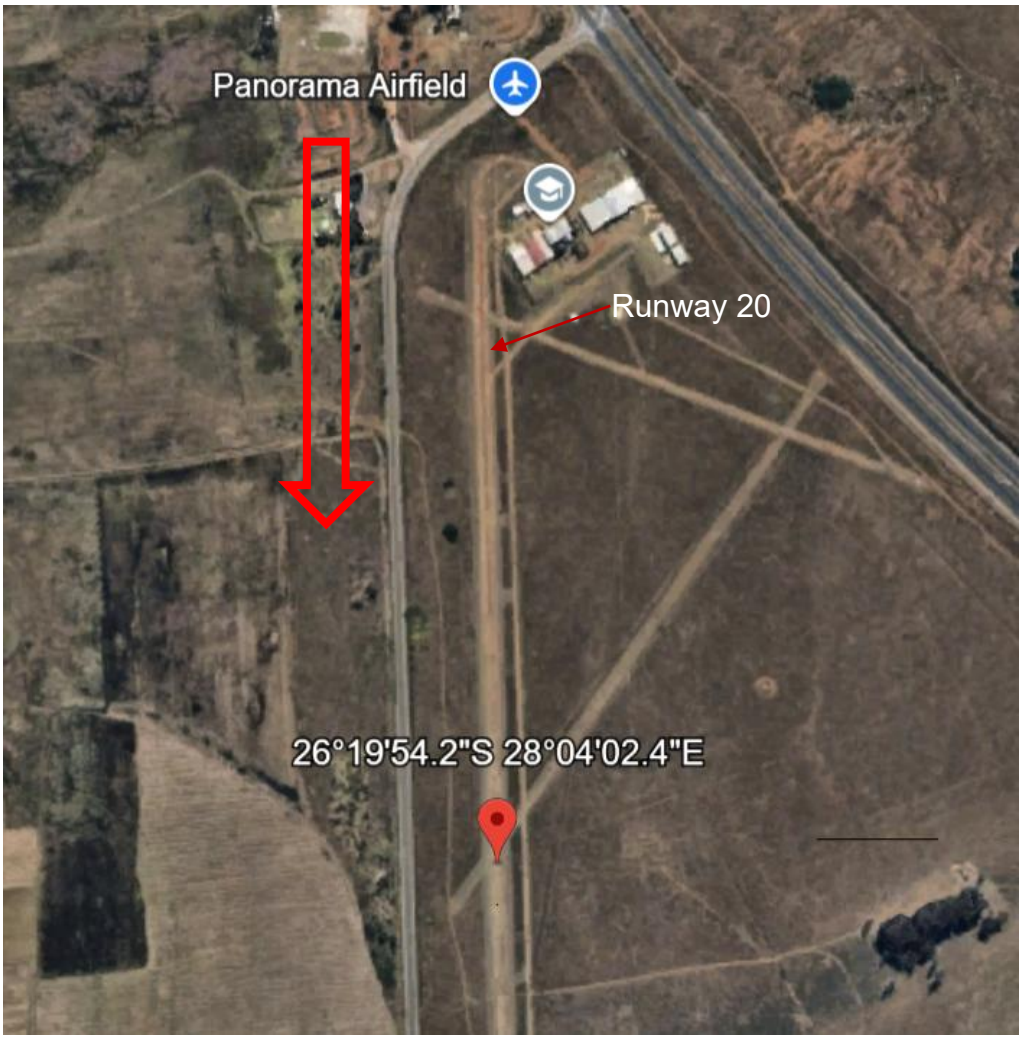

Figure 1: An aerial view of Panorama Airfield, the direction of landing (red arrow) and the approximate area where the serious incident occurred (red pin). (Source: Google Earth)

Figure 2: The aircraft with a damaged nose landing gear fork and wheel fairing. (Source: Pilot)

Figure 3: The right main landing gear and the area where the breakage occurred (red arrow). (Source: Pilot)

Post-serious Incident Technical Report

During the post-serious incident investigation, it was found that the aircraft had not been flown since September 2025; it had remained inactive for approximately five months prior to the serious incident flight. During this period, residual Mogas fuel in the fuel system may have deteriorated. *Mogas, which contains higher ethanol/alcohol content and automotive additives could absorb moisture, oxidise during prolonged storage, and leave residue deposits that may affect fuel flow*. The owner of the aircraft later advised the investigator that the fuel was contaminated because of the mixing of old residual fuel with newly added fuel. Due to the instability of the undercarriage after the serious

incident, an engine ground run could not be safely conducted; the aircraft was subsequently declared uneconomical to repair. No further operational testing or detailed component examination was conducted. However, it was concluded that the engine performance anomaly was likely caused by fuel degradation or contamination.

Procedure for Emergency Landing (Source: Pipistrel Virus 912 Flight Manual)

Emergency landing / Landing off airport

1. Shut both fuel valves.
2. Master switch OFF.
3. Approach and land with extreme caution, maintaining normal airspeeds.
4. After having landed leave the aircraft immediately.

The landing off airport manoeuvre MUST be preformed with regard to all normal flight parameters.

An Extract from the Civil Aviation Regulations 2011, Part 91.02.4

Recency

91.02.4 *(1) A pilot shall not act as PIC of an aircraft, or second-in-command (SIC) of an aircraft required to be crewed by more than one pilot, carrying passengers by day, unless such pilot has personally, within the 90 days immediately preceding the flight, carried out either by day or by night at least three take-offs and three landings in the same class or, if a type rating is required, type or variant of aeroplane, and in the case of a helicopter three circuits including three take-offs and three landings in the same type of helicopter as that in which such flight is to be undertaken. The landings required by this sub-regulation may be completed in an FSTD approved for the purpose. In the case of a tail-wheel aeroplane, each landing shall be carried out to a full-stop.*

The pilot was in contravention of Regulation 91.02.4 of the CAR 2011 which prohibits pilots from acting as pilot-in-command of aircraft carrying passengers unless the required take-offs and landings were completed within the preceding 90 days on the same category or type of aircraft. Investigation findings confirmed that the pilot had not met these recency requirements prior to the flight yet operated the aircraft with a passenger on-board.

Findings

1. Personnel Information

1.1. The pilot had a Private Pilot Licence (PPL) that was initially issued by the Regulator (SACAA) on 17 February 2006. The licence was reissued on 7 March 2025 with an expiry date of 28 February 2027. The pilot had accumulated a total of 747 flight hours of which 340 were on the aircraft type.

1.2. The pilot had a Class 2 aviation medical certificate that was valid until 31 May 2026. The pilot had a restriction to wear suitable corrective lenses.

1.3. The pilot contravened Regulation 91.02.4 of the Civil Aviation Regulations 2011 as he carried a passenger on-board without meeting the prescribed 90-day recency requirement.

2. Aircraft Information

2.1. The aircraft was maintained by an approved person (AP). The last 100-hour annual inspection of the aircraft was certified on 8 August 2025 at 951.03 total airframe hours. The aircraft had accrued 3 hours since the said inspection.

2.2. The aircraft was issued a Certificate of Release to Service (CRS) on 8 August 2025 at 951.03 total airframe hours with an expiry date of 7 August 2026 or at 1 051.03 airframe hours, whichever occurs first.

2.3. The aircraft had a valid Authority-to-Fly (ATF) Certificate that was initially issued on 22 October 2019. The latest ATF had an expiry date of 31 October 2026.

2.4. The aircraft Certificate of Registration (C of R) was issued to the present owner on 16 March 2004.

2.5. Fuel degradation or contamination in the aircraft fuel system likely contributed to the engine's loss of power.

Probable Cause(s)

A loss of engine power during the initial climb was likely a result of fuel degradation or contamination, which led to an unsuccessful emergency landing back on Runway 20 at Panorama Airfield.

Contributing Factor(s)

Possible fuel degradation or contamination.
Safety Action(s)
None.
Safety Message and/or Safety Recommendation/s
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
This report is produced without prejudice to the rights of the AIID, which are reserved.

This report is issued by:

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