



Section/division **Accident and Incident Investigations Division**

Form Number: CA 12-57

LIMITED OCCURRENCE INVESTIGATION REPORT – FINAL

Reference Number		CA18/3/2/1566					
Classification	Serious Incident		Date	3 August 2026		Time	1230Z
Type of Operation		Training (Part 141)					
Location							
Place of Departure		Port Alfred Aerodrome (FAPA), Eastern Cape Province		Place of Intended Landing		Port Alfred Aerodrome (FAPA), Eastern Cape Province	
Place of Occurrence		In a swamp, 2 nautical miles east of Port Alfred (FAPA), Eastern Cape Province					
GPS Co-ordinates	Latitude	33° 33' 00.15" S	Longitude	026° 53' 37" E	Elevation	290 ft	
Aircraft Information							
Registration		ZS-EBL					
Make; Model; S/N		Piper; PA28-140 Cherokee (Serial Number: 28-20435)					
Damage to Aircraft		Minor		Total Aircraft Hours		17 365.7	
Pilot-in-command							
Licence Type	Commercial Pilot Licence (CPL)		Gender	Male		Age	53
Licence Valid	Yes	Total Hours	4 497.5		Total Hours on Type		3 374.3
Total Hours 30 Days		18.5		Total Flying on Type Past 90 Days			84.1
People On-board	2+0	Injuries	0	Fatalities	0	Other (on ground)	0
What Happened							
On Monday afternoon, 3 August 2026, a flight instructor (FI) and a student pilot (SP) on-board a Piper PA28-140 aircraft with registration ZS-EBL were engaged in circuit training at Port Alfred Aerodrome (FAPA), Eastern Cape province. Visual meteorological conditions (VMC) prevailed at the time of the flight which was conducted under the provisions of Part 141 of the Civil Aviation Regulations (CAR) 2011, as amended. The operator stated that the FI and the SP had conducted a pre-flight inspection, and no anomalies were noted. The aircraft had a fuel endurance of 3.5 hours. The crew took off from Runway 01R and completed three uneventful circuits. After the third circuit whilst upwind of Runway 01R and at approximately 500 feet (ft) above ground level (AGL), the FI took control of the aircraft to demonstrate a simulated engine failure after take-off (EFATO). According to the FI, he did not inform the Air Traffic Service Unit/ Aerodrome Flight Information Service Officer ATSU/AFISO about the EFATO exercise because the radio frequency was congested. To initiate the exercise, he retarded the throttle to idle, established the aircraft at the published best glide speed of 85 miles per hour and selected a suitable field on which to conduct the simulated forced landing. During descent, the FI configured the aircraft as required and progressively extended the flaps to 40°. He also demonstrated the engine restart drill to the SP. The AFISO contacted the crew to confirm whether their operations were normal, to which the FI responded, "Affirm simulated," indicating that the emergency (EFATO emergency) was							

simulated and formed part of the training. At approximately 300ft AGL, the FI initiated a go-around by applying full throttle. However, the engine did not produce the expected power and, instead, it sputtered. With the aircraft in a low-energy configuration, descending with flaps set to 40° and with insufficient height to climb, the FI transmitted a MAYDAY call and committed to a forced landing. He closed the fuel mixture control and executed a forced landing. The aircraft touched down on a swamp approximately 2 nautical miles (nm) east of FAPA. During the landing roll, the aircraft's wings impacted some small trees.

After the aircraft had stopped, the crew switched off the master switch and disembarked from the aircraft. The aircraft sustained minor damage, and none of the occupants was injured.

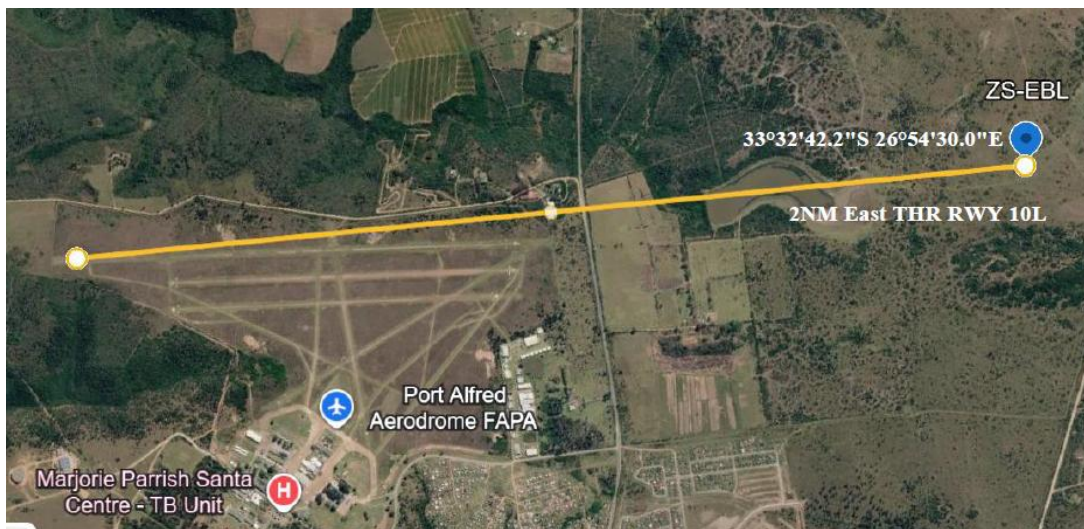


Figure 1: The approximate location of the serious incident site. (Source: Google Earth Map)



Figure 2: The aircraft after the serious incident. (Source: Operator)

Post-serious Incident Inspection

The aircraft was inspected and the engine was run (started) on site. The aircraft was later recovered to the operator's maintenance facility at FAPA where the engine inspection was conducted by turning the propeller, which moved freely. Further assessments of external damage were conducted, and all was found to be in good condition. Moreover, an engine run-up check was carried out and the engine started normally; all engine parameters were met.

Engine Simulation Exercise

An engine failure simulation exercise on a fixed-wing aircraft under Civil Aviation Regulations (CAR) involves maintaining aircraft control, establishing best glide or single-engine operational speed, executing memory drills and following safety altitude limits.

Operational Safety and Altitude Limits (Approved Training Organisation's Standard Operating Procedure)

- *Minimum Heights for Shutdown: Actual engine shutdowns in-flight for training must be conducted at safe heights, typically no lower than 300ft above ground level (AGL) for light aircraft, and up to 500ft AGL for larger or multi-engine types as recommended by manufacturers and regulatory guidance.*
- *Simulations Close to Ground: Simulated failures near the ground or during take-off must use touch-drills or gentle, simulated power reductions rather than actual fuel/ignition cut-offs.*
- *Environmental Checks: Instructors must verify visual meteorological conditions, (VMC) safe cloud base, clear visibility, and adequate runway lengths before conducting the exercise.*

Single-Engine Aircraft

- *Immediately lower nose to the published best glide speed ($V_{[g]}$).*
- *Select a viable landing area immediately.*
- *Perform restart checks if altitude permits; otherwise, execute the forced landing checklist*

Crew

The FI had a Commercial Pilot Licence (CPL) that was initially issued by the Regulator (SACAA) on 19 January 2011. The latest CPL was reissued on 10 September 2025 with an expiry date of 31

August 2026. The FI's Class 1 aviation medical certificate was valid; it was issued on 15 August 2025 with an expiry date of 31 August 2026. The aircraft type was endorsed in his licence. The FI also had an Instructor Grade 2 rating. He had a total of 4 497.5 hours of which 3 374.3 hours were acquired on the aircraft type.

The FI acknowledged that the recovery was initiated too late at a low altitude. The engine was expected to respond within a few seconds after rapid application of full throttle (from idle). The FI also stated that if he had initiated a go-around earlier, it would have allowed sufficient altitude for the engine to develop full power before the aircraft reached a critical height. The delayed decision to discontinue the simulated forced landing reduced the available options when the engine did not produce the expected power.

The SP had a Student Pilot Licence (SPL) that was initially issued by the Regulator on 16 September 2025 with an expiry date of 15 September 2026. The SP had logged 25.7 hours on the aircraft type. The SP had a Class 2 aviation medical certificate that was issued on 9 September 2025 with an expiry date of 30 September 2030 with no restrictions.

Aircraft

The last mandatory periodic inspection (MPI) of the aircraft was certified on 4 July 2026 at 17 339 airframe hours. The aircraft had a total of 17 365.7 hours; it had accrued 26.7 hours since the stated MPI. A Certificate of Release to Service (CRS) was issued on 4 July 2026 by an aircraft maintenance organisation (AMO). The CRS had an expiry date of 4 July 2027 or at 17 439 airframe hours, whichever comes first. The aircraft had a valid Certificate of Airworthiness (C of A) that was initially issued by the Regulator on 19 December 2011. The latest C of A was renewed on 6 July 2026 with an expiry date of 31 July 2027. A Certificate of Registration (C of R) was issued to the present owner on 19 July 2018.

The AMO which conducted the MPI had an AMO Certificate that was issued on 26 September 2025 with an expiry date of 30 September 2026.

Approved Training Organisation

The approved training organisation (ATO) had an ATO Certificate that was issued by the Regulator on 1 August 2023 with an expiry date of 31 July 2028. The Piper PA28-180 Cherokee aircraft, registered as ZS-EBL, was listed in the ATO's training Operations Specifications.

Findings
1. The flight instructor (FI) was licensed, medically fit and qualified to conduct instructional training on the aircraft type. 2. The student pilot (SP) had a valid Student Pilot Licence (SPL) and had accumulated a total of 25.7 hours on the aircraft type towards attaining a Private Pilot Licence (PPL). 3. The aircraft records indicated that the aircraft was properly maintained. 4. The approved training organisation (ATO) was certified and rated for the type of training conducted. 5. The simulated engine failure after take-off (EFATO) was initiated at approximately 500ft above ground level (AGL), which left the aircraft with limited height and energy for recovery. 6. The Air Traffic Service Unit/Aerodrome Flight Information Service Officer (ATSU/AFISO) was not advised before the exercise was initiated, which reduced shared situational awareness during circuit operations. 7. The recovery was initiated late and, when power was applied, the engine did not respond as expected. 8. The initiated forced landing in a swamp resulted in minor damage to the aircraft when it impacted some small trees. 9. The occupants were not injured.
Probable Cause(s)
A simulated engine failure exercise performed at low level after take-off resulted in a forced landing due to the low energy state of the aircraft at the time of recovery.
Contributing Factor(s)
None.
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</i>

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 desktop 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 <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**