

Accident

Aircraft Type and Registration:	Piper PA-28-161, G-EKIR	
No & Type of Engines:	1 Lycoming O-320-D3G piston engine	
Year of Manufacture:	1989 (Serial no: 2841157)	
Date & Time (UTC):	22 March 2023 at 1300 hrs	
Location:	Sandtoft Airfield, Belton, North Lincolnshire	
Type of Flight:	Private	
Persons on Board:	Crew - 1	Passengers - None
Injuries:	Crew - None	Passengers - N/A
Nature of Damage:	Left navigation and position lights, casing damaged. Scuffs to paint work on wing tip area	
Commander's Licence:	Private Pilot's Licence	
Commander's Age:	32 years	
Commander's Flying Experience:	105 hours (of which 98 were on type) Last 90 days - 16 hours Last 28 days - 7 hours	
Information Source:	Aircraft Accident Report Form submitted by the pilot	

Synopsis

The aircraft wingtip collided with a delivery vehicle which was parked on the taxiway. The vehicle did not have permission to enter or park on the taxiway.

History of the flight

Having flown into Sandtoft Airfield earlier in the day the pilot was preparing for his return flight to Gloucester. Having started the engine, he proceeded to taxi from his parking position (Stand 7) across the runway and along Taxiway A to uplift fuel. There was a vehicle parked on Taxiway A completing a delivery to the cafe.

Having judged the gap to be sufficient for the aircraft wingspan, the pilot proceeded at a slow walking pace but clipped the port wingtip of G-EKIR on the side and wing mirror of the vehicle. The port wing navigation light and casing were damaged and there was paintwork scuffing to the wing tip area. The vehicle had damage to the right panel and below the right wing mirror. There were no injuries.

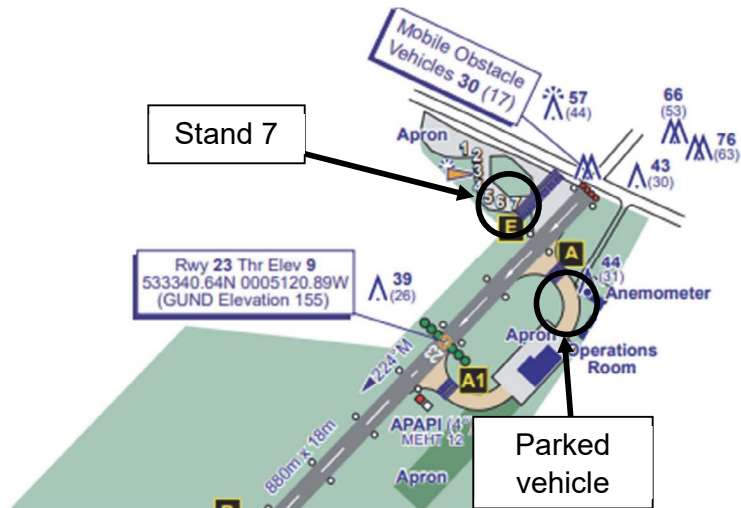


Figure 1

Map of parking area and site of collision at Sandtoft Airfield



Figure 2

Damage to the aircraft wingtip (top) and to the vehicle panel side panel (left) and below the wing mirror (right) (Images used with permission)

Aerodrome information

Sandtoft is a licensed aerodrome although it restricts movements of aircraft requiring a licence primarily to Saturday and Sunday. The airfield provides an Air Ground Communications Service (AGCS), which is not viewed as an Air Traffic Service in the UK because it does not include an alerting service as part of its content. AGCS radio station operators provide traffic and weather information to pilots operating on and in the vicinity of the aerodrome.

Personnel

The pilot reported that he felt there was enough room for him to pass the van which was parked on the left side of the taxiway on the curve as he taxied from Stand 7. The vehicle was parked with a gap of around 1 or 2 m from the edge of the taxiway. G-EKIR has a wingspan of 10.70 m and the taxiway width is 15 m. At the time of the collision there was also another aircraft parked partly on the taxiway to the right of G-EKIR. It can be difficult to judge the space available against the wingspan from inside the aircraft. The pilot did not ask for assistance before attempting to pass the van.

The vehicle driver was on his first visit to Sandtoft, although he was accompanied by another staff member who had been before. He commented that there was no signage or barrier at the entrance and that it was common practice for the drivers to park behind the cafe. He did not realise that he was on the taxiway or that permission was required to enter the airfield.

Other information

Regulations regarding access

The Air Navigation Order 2016 and Regulations¹ contain regulations made by the CAA under powers in the Civil Aviation Act 1982 and the Air Navigation Order 2016. Section 2 Rules of the Air Regulations contains within Schedule 1, Section 3 rules regarding the movement of vehicles on the aerodrome:

Access to and movement of persons and vehicles on the aerodrome

13.— (1) *Unless there is a public right of way over it, a person or vehicle must—*

- (a) *not go onto any part of an aerodrome without the permission of the person in charge of that part of the aerodrome; and*
- (b) *comply with any conditions subject to which that permission may be granted.*

(2) *A person or vehicle must—*

- (a) *not go onto or move on the manoeuvring area of an aerodrome which provides an air traffic control service or*

Footnote

¹ CAP 393: Regulations made under powers in the Civil Aviation Act 1982 and the Air Navigation Order 2016 (caa.co.uk) [accessed 21 June 2023].

- a flight information service without the permission of the person providing that service; and*
- (b) *comply with any conditions subject to which that permission may be granted.*

Sandtoft does not provide either an air traffic control service or a flight information service, so regulation (1) applies, and any vehicle requires the permission of the person in charge to enter any part of the aerodrome. There is signage at the entrance to airfield setting out the requirements for entry. The airfield operator does have a standing arrangement with the cafe for delivery vehicles to enter the taxiway providing they have the appropriate insurance, and the drivers understand the rules under which they must operate whilst on the taxiway. The vehicle involved in the collision had not sought or been granted permission from the airfield operator to enter or park on the taxiway. Since the accident the delivery company have instructed their drivers to park in the car park rather than entering the taxiway.

Vehicle insurance

Most vehicle insurance policies do not cover driving on an aerodrome and require a specific clause to be included for any cover to be valid.

Analysis

With the vehicle parked on the taxiway by the cafe and another aircraft parked partially on the taxiway on the other side, there was not enough room for G-EKIR to pass. The pilot judged the gap to be sufficient for his aircraft and did not ask for assistance. The wingtip struck the van causing limited damage to both the vehicle and the wingtip of G-EKIR. There were no injuries.

The vehicle driver had not asked for or gained permission from the airfield operator to be on the taxiway and the vehicle was probably not insured to do so either.

Safety action

As a result of this incident the following safety action was taken:

The delivery company have instructed their drivers to park in the car park for deliveries to the cafe rather than entering the taxiway.

The airfield operator will review the signage at the entry to the airfield to ensure it is appropriate for ensuring users are aware they are entering an active airfield.