



Civil Aviation Authority
SAFETY NOTICE
Number: SN-2022/001



Issued: 17 February 2022

Adjustable Seats in General Aviation Aircraft

This Safety Notice contains recommendations regarding operational safety.

Recipients must ensure that this Notice is copied to all members of their staff who need to take appropriate action or who may have an interest in the information (including any 'in-house' or contracted maintenance organisations and relevant outside contractors).

Applicability:	
Aerodromes:	Not primarily affected
Air Traffic:	Not primarily affected
Airspace:	Not primarily affected
Airworthiness:	Not primarily affected
Flight Operations:	Operators of General Aviation Aircraft
Licensed/Unlicensed Personnel:	General Aviation Pilots

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Safety Notice is relevant to general aviation pilots who fly aircraft with adjustable seats. It is published to remind pilots of the importance of checking that all seats are securely locked in position prior to departure and any secondary locking mechanisms are correctly used, particularly after any seat position adjustment.
- 1.2 It is prompted by a recent fatal accident in which the preliminary investigation identified that the pilot's seat moved rearwards to the full extent of its travel during take-off. The aircraft subsequently departed from controlled flight and descended rapidly to the ground, fatally injuring the pilot. The evidence indicates that the seat adjustment pin had not been correctly located in one of the holes on the adjustment rail and a secondary locking mechanism appears not to have been tightened.

2 Recommended Actions

- 2.1 Pilots should ensure they are familiar with the seat adjustment and locking mechanisms in the aircraft as well as any available backup locking means.
- 2.2 Each pre-start-up check should include confirmation that occupied seats are locked in the desired position and any secondary locking mechanisms, such as backup straps, are correctly utilised. These checks are especially important after any seat position adjustment but should be performed as part of each pre-start-up check, even if the seat has not been adjusted. To ensure the seat is locked in position, sufficient fore and aft pressure should be applied to the seat. Thought should be given as to how best to achieve this, recognising that there may be few, if

any, obvious hand or foot holds available. Aircraft fitted with a tail wheel tend to have a positive seat angle (nose up), making it difficult to apply forward pressure to confirm the seat is locked in position. For such aircraft, it may be easier to apply forward pressure on the seat from outside the aircraft.

- 2.3 Consideration should be given to the use of tell-tale marking (e.g. fluorescent paint) on locking pins/levers if it would assist in determining the position of the seat locking means i.e. locked or not locked. Caution should be exercised to ensure that any tell-tale marking does not interfere with the functionality of the seat locking mechanism.
- 2.4 Outside of scheduled maintenance checks, pilots should monitor key elements of the seat adjustment and locking mechanisms for wear and proper functioning. This may be achieved by visual inspection only. Components that are not readily visible may be better inspected by use of a torch and mirror as well as touch checks. No removal or disassembly of components should be required. If defects are found that compromise the seat locking mechanism, these should be fixed before further flights are undertaken.
- 2.5 Seat adjustment and locking mechanisms can be altered or damaged by heavy landings. If the pilot is aware of a previous heavy landing on the aircraft, a specific check of the seat adjustment and locking mechanisms should be conducted.
- 2.6 To give the best chance of mitigating a seat locking mechanism failure, pilots should consider the points above and plan how they would handle such an event.

3 Queries

- 3.1 Any queries or requests for further guidance as a result of this communication should be addressed to:

GA Unit, Safety & Airspace Regulation Group
Civil Aviation Authority
Aviation House
Gatwick Airport South
West Sussex
RH6 0YR

Tel: 0330 1383495

E-mail: GA@caa.co.uk

4 Cancellation

- 4.1 This Safety Notice will remain in force until further notice.