

Robert Gretz
Senior Air Safety Investigator
Eastern Region Aviation

Date: 5/23/23

Subject: ERA23LA061

Contact: Jason Cobb, FAA CMH FSDO

Mr. Cobb was interviewed via telephone. He stated that the fuel selector was a first generation fuel selector that can be rotated 360°. On one side of the knob is a handle and on the other side is a small triangle to point to the selected tank. As the small triangle is difficult to see, the operator painted a gray stripe on the triangle and fuel tank positions to assist pilots in correctly selecting the desired position.



Mr. Cobb is an operations inspector and he was accompanied by an airworthiness inspector, Aaron Peterson, who stated that there was nothing about the selector being contrary to FARs as the airplane was a 1968 model and that was the fuel selector at the time.

Mr. Cobb added that the flight instructor had accrued about 10 hours in the airplane, misunderstanding the fuel selector position the entire time (positioning the handle to desired tank instead of triangle), but had not experienced a loss of engine power prior to the accident takeoff. He had planned to further examine the selector with Inspector Peterson, but the NTSB had never followed up on it. He believes that the operator has since donated an airplane to a fire department.

Mr. Cobb added that he believes there has been some guidance published regarding the first generation fuel selectors, but that it is not mandatory.

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Contact: Pat Rooney, Sundowner Aviation, Carroll, OH

Mr. Rooney was interviewed via telephone. He stated that the wreckage has since been scrapped in a junkyard. He further stated that the flight instructor knew the correct positioning of the fuel selector in that airplane as he had taught in it many times; however, the selector is on the left side of the cockpit and obstructed by the student pilot's left leg.

The student pilot was on their third lesson and completed a before start checklist, which includes selecting fuel to the fullest tank. Mr. Rooney believes that the flight instructor had the right fuel tank selected correctly (as he had just returned from a previous lesson in that airplane) and that the student pilot attempted to select the left fuel tank, but in actuality moved the selector to an off position.

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Date: **6/1/23**

Subject: **ERA23LA061**

Contact: **Christian Conte, Kimbolton, OH**

Mr. Conte was interviewed via telephone. He stated that that he was confused with the after-market white paint stripes on the fuel selector; however, his prior student stated he never moved the fuel selector and he told the accident student not to touch the selector because she was knew. Additionally, Mr. Conte conducted 15 to 20 minutes of the accident lesson on the ground, with the engine running, explaining things to the new student. He believes that there was something wrong with the selector that the engine could operate so long with the selector in the incorrect position. He added that he had heard of prior power losses in that airplane due to the same confusion as to fuel selector position.