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Date: October 28, 2024
Subject: ERA24LA357 Inspectors Statement
Contact: Cody Watson, Aviation Safety Inspector, FAA

The Following is an excerpt from the FAA Inspectors statement sent to the NTSB on August 28, 2024:

...The aircraft has damage to the prop; firewall appears undamaged. The right horizontal stabilizer impacted the ground when the aircraft rolled into a drainage ditch at approx. 35 MPH. The empennage appears to have a lateral twist; right side low, left side high. Compression and tension damage on the top and bottom of both horizontal stabilizers is consistent with the reported impact type and speed. It is likely the empennage bulkhead is damaged along with the stringers in the tail.

The cause is attributed to an incorrectly installed pilot's seat. The front left seat rail guide was not engaged with the rail, and it positioned the seat too high to prevent complete engagement of the seat adjustment rod. The seat would lock, however, when enough force is applied to the back of the seat the adjustment rod would disengage and allow movement.

The seat was removed and reinstalled by the owner/pilot to facilitate other preventative maintenance. He is not a certificated mechanic, however, § 43.3 allows the pilot to perform this function....