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Date: October 28, 2024
Subject: ERA24LA357 Pilots Statement
Contact: Craig Burlingame, Pilot

The Following is an excerpt from the pilot's statement sent to the NTSB on August 28, 2024:

My name is Craig Burlingame. I am a Private Pilot, and I own a 1962 Cessna 172, Tail Number N8400X. The purpose of this note is to recap the incident that occurred at Culpeper Regional Airport {KCJR) located in Culpeper, Virginia on Thursday, August 15, 2024. KCJR is my home airport.

Thursday was a beautiful day, and I decided I would fly after work to do some pattern work and practice take-offs and landings. At approximately 6:30 PM, I did my preflight and walk-around. I also sumped my fuel tanks and checked that they looked clear. I entered 8400X and went through my checklist which included adjusting my seat and seat belt. I yelled out Clear Prop and started 8400X. I taxied to the runup area before Runway 22 where I completed my checklist before takeoff. I announced to Culpeper traffic that Skyhawk 8400X is departing Runway 22 and will remain in the pattern. At approximately 6:55 PM, I took off from Runway 22. I completed a left-Hand pattern and did a full stop landing on Runway 22. I taxied back to Runway 22. Once again, I announced to Culpeper Traffic that 8400X is departing Runway 22 and will remain Jn the pattern. I completed another left-hand pattern and did a full stop landing on Runway 22. I taxied back to Runway 22, announced to Culpeper traffic that 8400X is departing Runway 22 and will remain in the pattern.

I pushed the throttle to the Full Throttle position. I started accelerating and after approximately 50 feet to 75 feet of acceleration, I felt my seat "pop" and I immediately slid all the way back. I let go of the yoke to prevent the nose from lifting in the air. 8400X was still accelerating and I could not reach the rudder pedals or the toe brakes. I tried my best to pull myself forward and I was able to reach the throttle and pull it out to the idle position. I still could not reach the rudder pedals and brakes, and my seatbelt was holding me back in the seat. I could barely see over the instrument panel, but I could see that I was drifting left of the runway onto the grass. I continued to roll through the grass and towards a ditch. 8400X entered the ditch and had a prop strike and stopped at that spot. I shut off all power and instruments and exited 8400X at approximately 7:30 PM. I did not get injured. ...