



FIRST FATAL ACCIDENT OF AN ECLIPSE BIZJET REPORTED

News / Business aviation



South African aviation agency officials have started their investigation into Monday's crash of an **EclipseEA500**. The accident, the **first fatal mishap** involving the very light jet, killed the owner-pilot, 57-year-old South African businessman Kobus Dicks. When he took ownership of the aircraft in 2013, it was the first Eclipse to be registered in the African continent.

The aircraft, built in 2008 (S/N 142), was en route from Lanseria to Cape Town and was near 36,000 feet when radio contact was lost. According to radar data, the aircraft then made several descending right turns. A Gripen jet from a nearby air base was scrambled to intercept the aircraft and came alongside the Eclipse within 15 minutes.

Despite attempts by the Gripen pilot to make contact with Dicks, the aircraft continued to lose altitude at a rate of 3,700 fpm and crashed in a field south of Swellendam. Hypoxia and pilot incapacitation are being investigated as possible reasons for the lack of response. In addition to this fatal crash, the Eclipse has been involved in seven nonfatal accidents since 2008.

SOURCE: AIN

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