IDAHO AVIATION ACCIDENT SCORE CARD (IAASC)

Laidlaw Corrals Airport (U99) (Courtesy of Local Law Enforcement)

Prepared by the Idaho Division of Aeronautics, Safety and Education Department

2025

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 2025 Idaho Aviation Accident Score Card (IAASC). The Idaho Division of Aeronautics presents this review of Idaho aviation accidents so that you may learn lessons from the experiences of others that may apply to your flight training and preparation.

This report provides details on all Idaho aircraft accidents that occurred from **January 1 to December 31, 2023** and is compiled directly from the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) database. National data was also obtained from the AOPA Air Safety Institute's McSpadden Report.

The report includes yearly comparisons and summaries, total number of General Aviation (GA) accidents, fatal accidents, fatalities, pilot qualifications, age, and class of aircraft. In addition, the IAASC provides an overview of Idaho aviation trends. It is published annually and analyzes accidents from two years prior. While preliminary information on aircraft investigations is available within weeks of the accident, the full NTSB investigation can take 2-3 years.

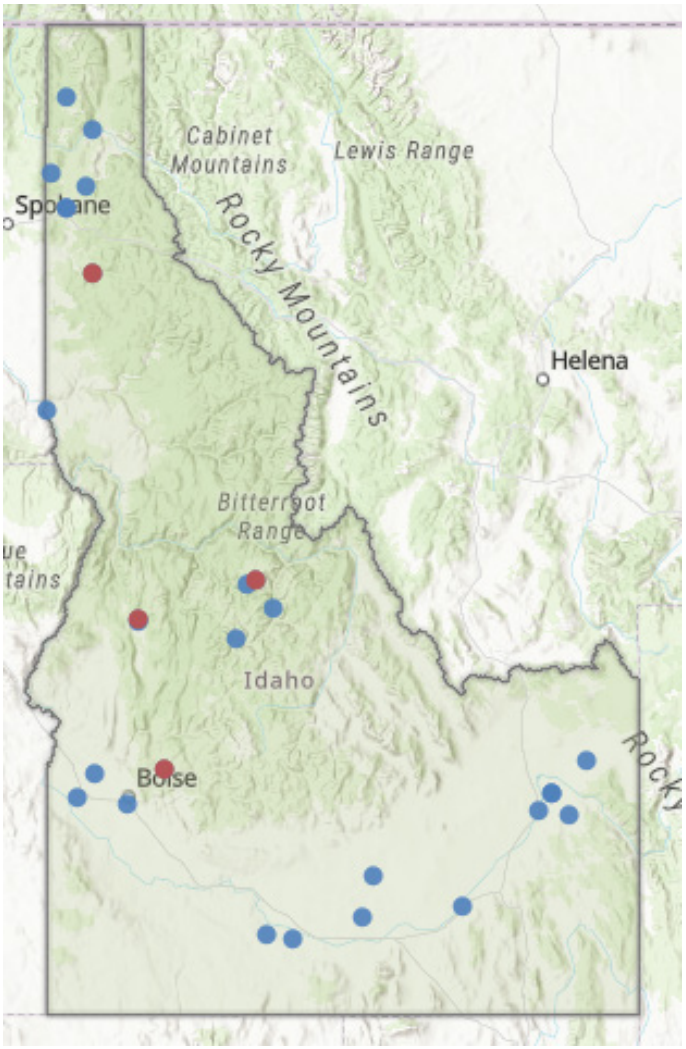
The Idaho Transportation Department's vision is to "**Enhance your quality of life through transportation**." The Division of Aeronautics supports this vision by providing relevant, high-quality information on safety, and educational programs to benefit our aviation community. We offer welcome packets for visiting pilots, airport standard operating procedures, and fly-in safety briefings. We also sponsor safety seminars and meet every year for our Safety Stand Down.

**General Aviation, for the purposes of this report, excludes flight activity performed by the uniformed armed services and scheduled airlines. Furthermore, gliders, weight-shift control aircraft, powered parachutes, gyrocopters, lighter-than-air, and aircraft with maximum takeoff weights greater than 12,500 pounds are also excluded. Please note, however, this report does include flight instruction, agricultural, public-benefit missions such as fire suppression and law enforcement, cargo, and passenger charter operations.*

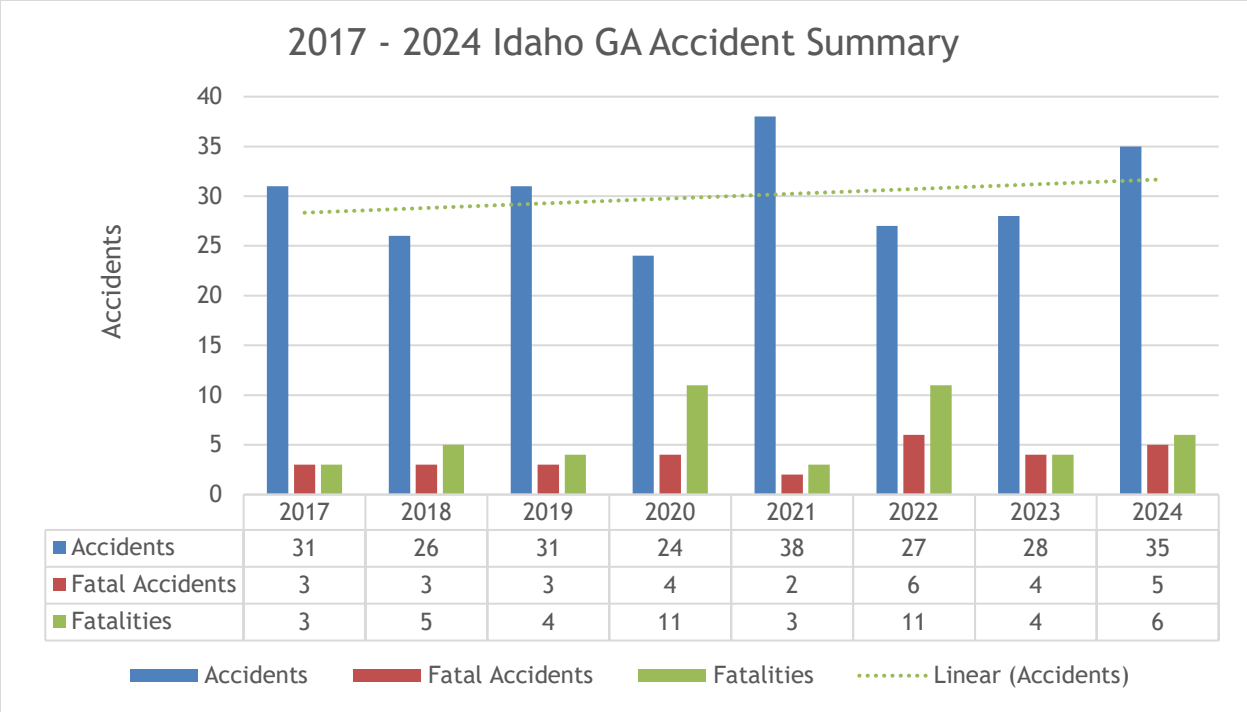
ACCIDENT STATISTICS

Comparison between 2022 and 2023

- Aircraft accidents increased from 27 in 2022 to 28 in 2023.
- While total accidents increased, **fatal accidents decreased from 6 to 4.**
- The majority (65%) of the accidents were due to **"pilot error".**
- **75% of accidents occurred during takeoff or landing.**
- 45% of Idaho accidents occurred in tailwheel aircraft.
- 60% of the total accidents occurred during the summer flying season (May through Aug).



Accidents 2023, ● Fatal

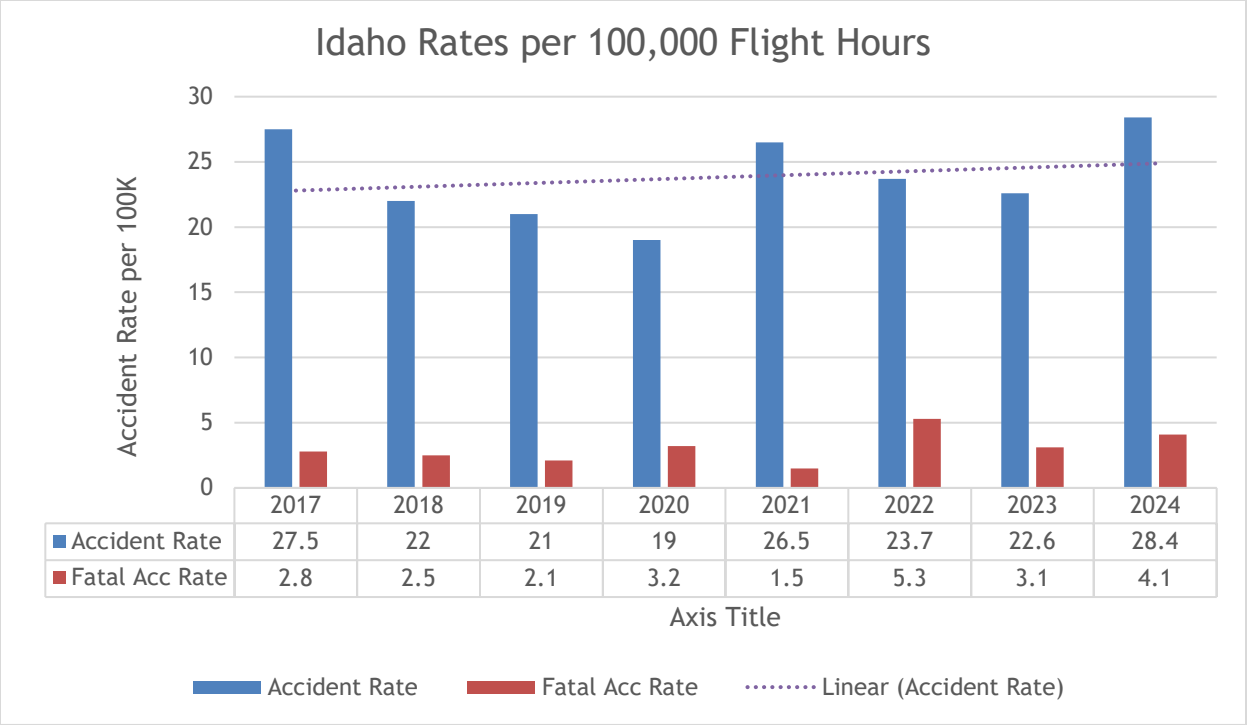


	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Accidents	31	26	31	24	38	27	28	35
Fatal Accidents	3	3	3	4	2	6	4	5
Fatalities	3	5	4	11	3	11	4	6

2023 saw a decrease in the number of fatalities, but a slight increase in the total number of accidents.

Until 2020, the number of accidents in Idaho was trending down. **2021 saw the total accidents increase by 35%. 2022 saw a significant increase in the number of fatal accidents.** 2023 was only down by 2 fatal accident from 2022 and still trending up in the total number of accidents. We will break down the year-by-year accident rate for Idaho and then look for trends in the accidents to see what we can learn.

Airplane at Accident Site (Photo courtesy Bonneville County Sheriff)

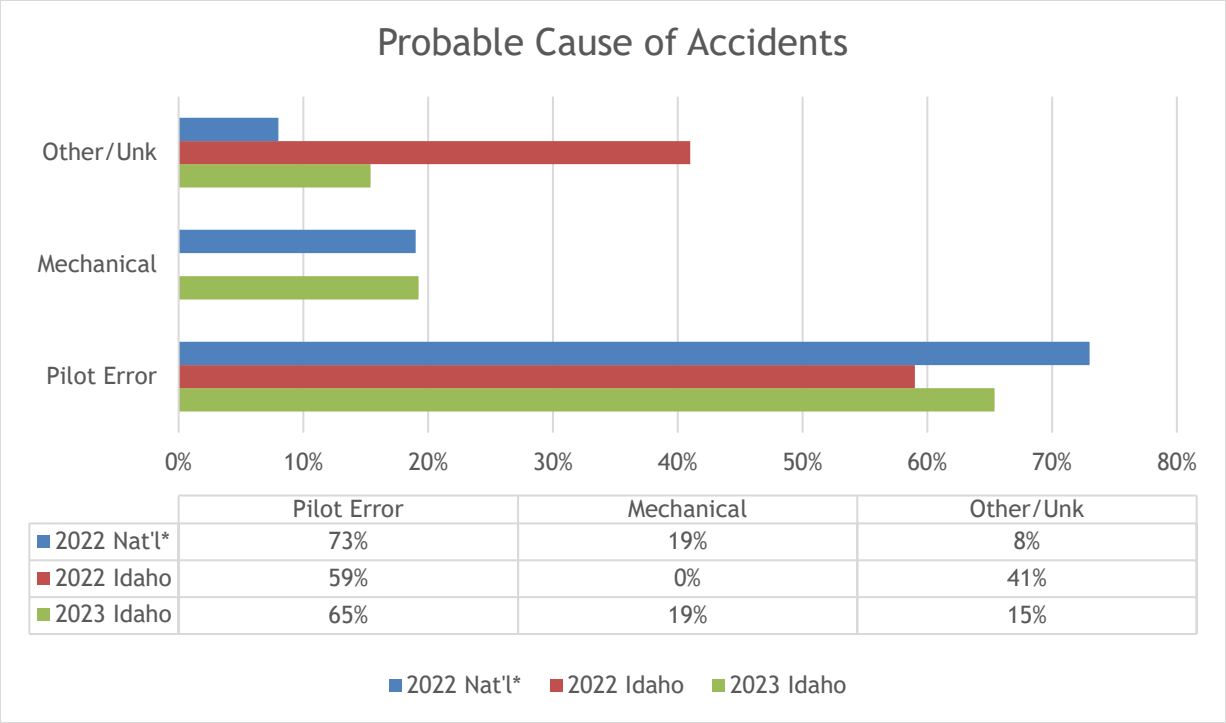


	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total GA Hours Flown	105K	118K	143K	126K	136K	114K	128K	123K

Accident Rate Methodology

We calculated the Idaho GA accident rate based on total 100LL fuel purchased in the state for the analysis year. We use average fuel burn of 13.7 gallons per hour for 2023. We then divided total gallons sold by 13.7 to give total flight hours flown for the analysis year. The number of accidents and number of fatalities are used to determine the equivalent rate per 100,000 hours flown. *(13.7 GPH per FAA 2023 GA Survey)*

The General Aviation accident rate in Idaho trended upwards for 2023. In 2022 we had a decrease in total accidents, and an increase in fatal accidents. 2023 saw total accidents stay relatively flat, but fatal accidents decreased by 2. On average, Idaho has approximately 30 aircraft accidents a year. 10-15% of those accidents will include a fatality.



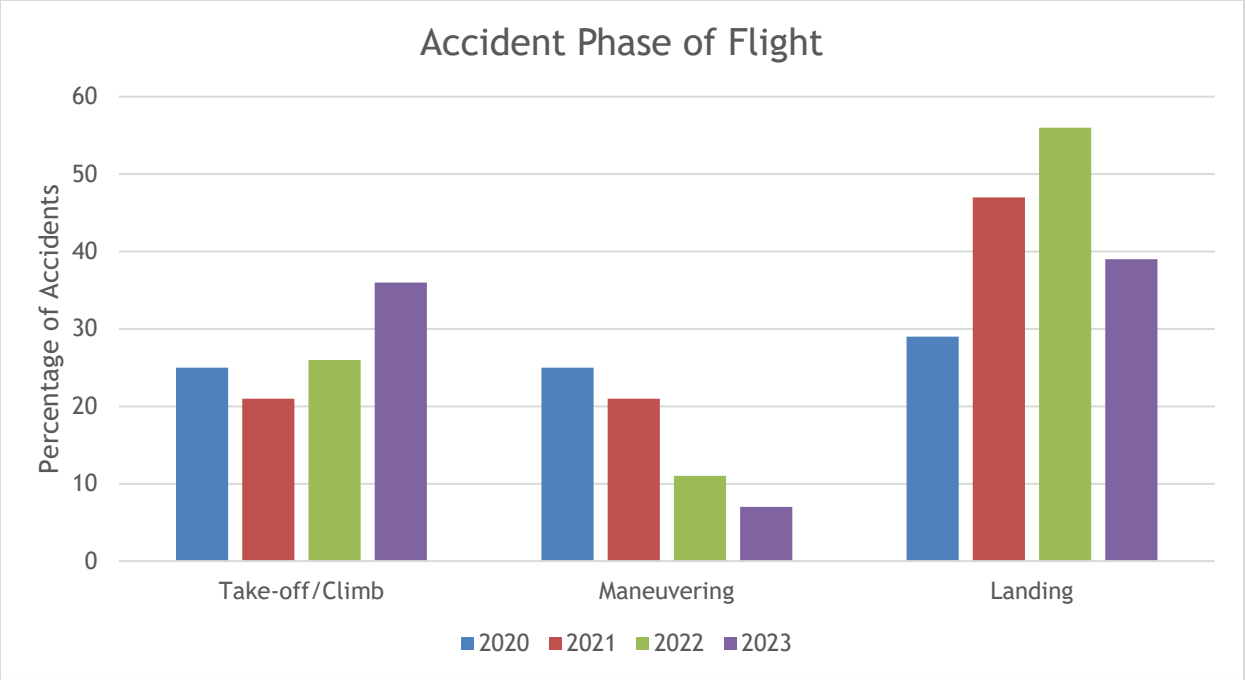
	Pilot Error	Mechanical	Other/Unk
2022 Nat'l*	73%	19%	8%
2022 Idaho	59%	0%	41%
2023 Idaho	65%	19%	15%

**** From 34th AOPA Air Safety Institute Accident Report***

In 2023, 65% of accidents were the result of pilot error.

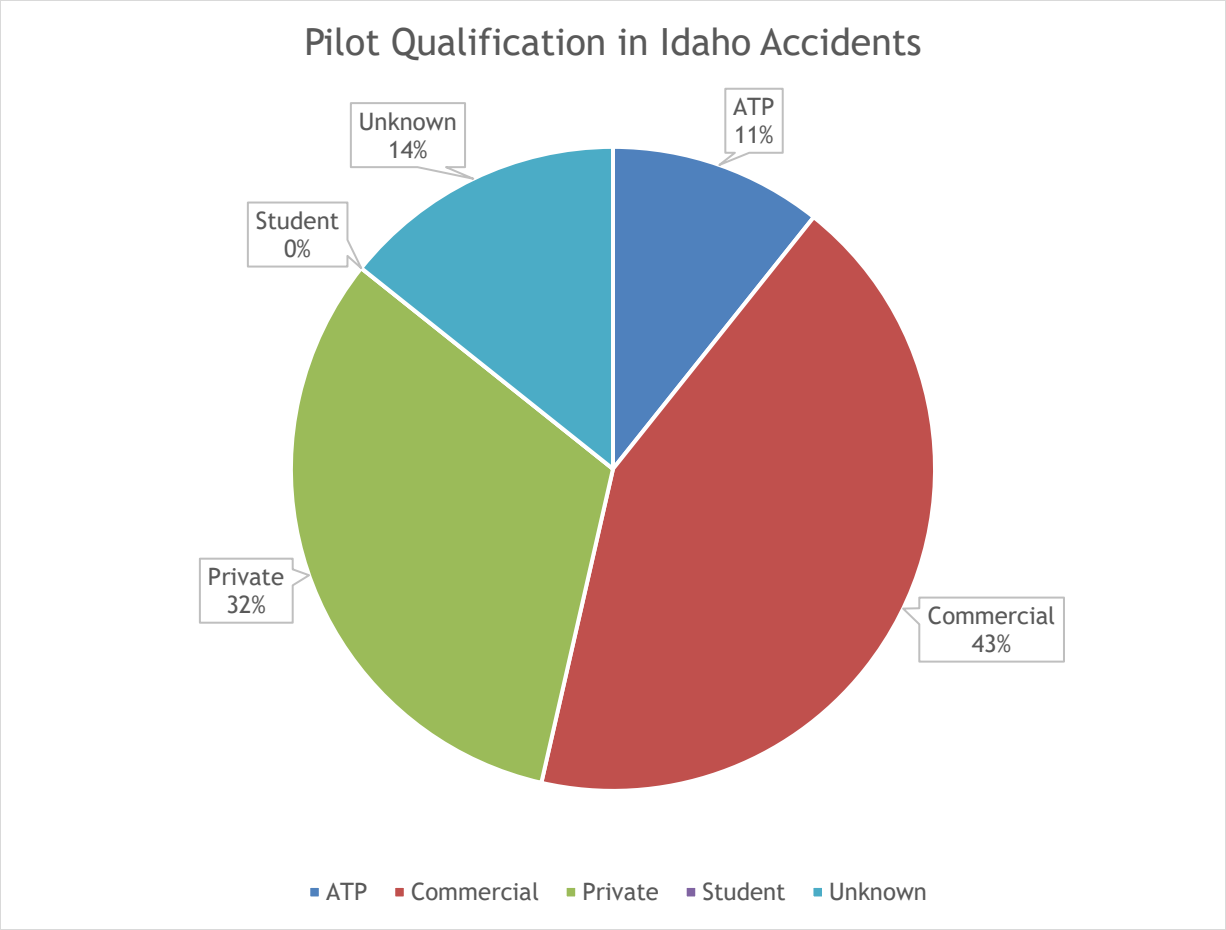
The causes of accidents fell into three categories for analysis:

- Pilot-Related – accidents occurring from the improper actions or inactions of the pilot, to include CFI when providing training.
- Mechanical – accidents occurring from mechanical failure.
- Other/Unknown – bird strike, incapacitation and accidents with an undetermined cause according to the NTSB.



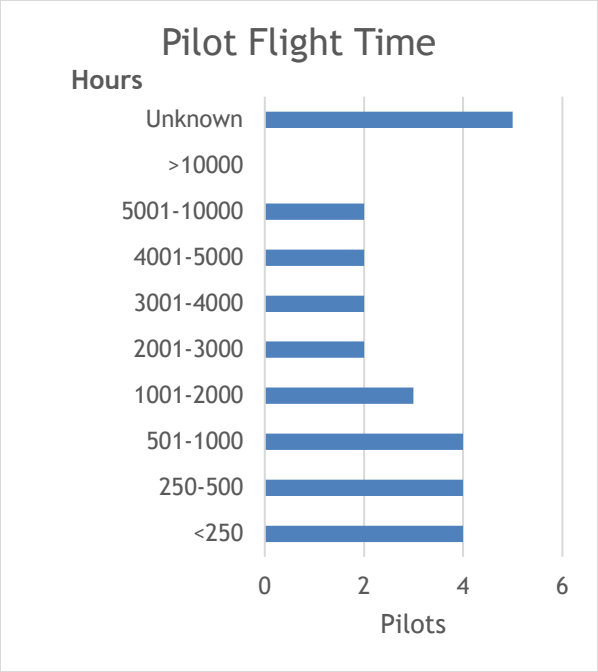
In 2023, 75% of Idaho accidents occurred during takeoff and landing.

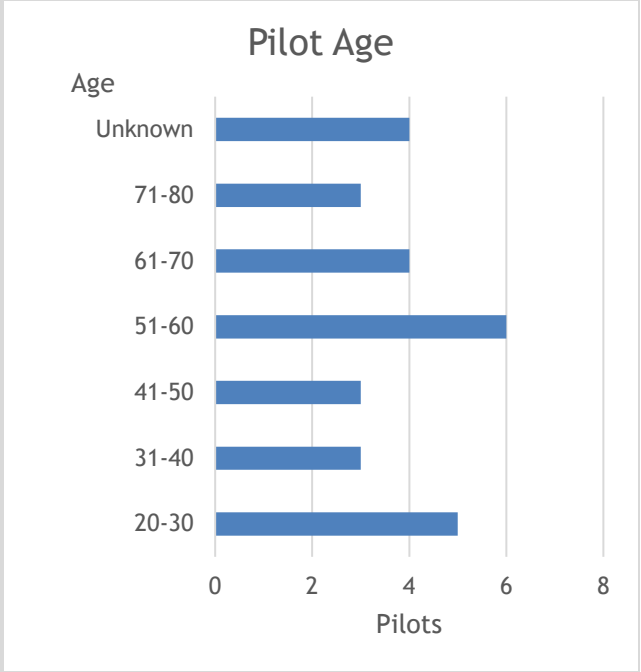
Accidents by phase of flight in Idaho mirror the nationwide trend. **Landing continues to be the leading accident phase in Idaho as well as the nation.**



Pilot Qualification	Idaho 2023	National 2022*	Idaho 2022	Idaho 2021
ATP	11%	14%	11%	9%
Commercial	43%	32%	7%	31%
Private	32%	40%	41%	38%
Student	0%	6%	0%	16%
Other/Unknown	14%	8%	37%	7%
*** From 34th AOPA Air Safety Institute Accident Report**				

In Idaho, 32% of accidents were commanded by Private pilots, 43% were Commercial pilots and 11% were ATP.



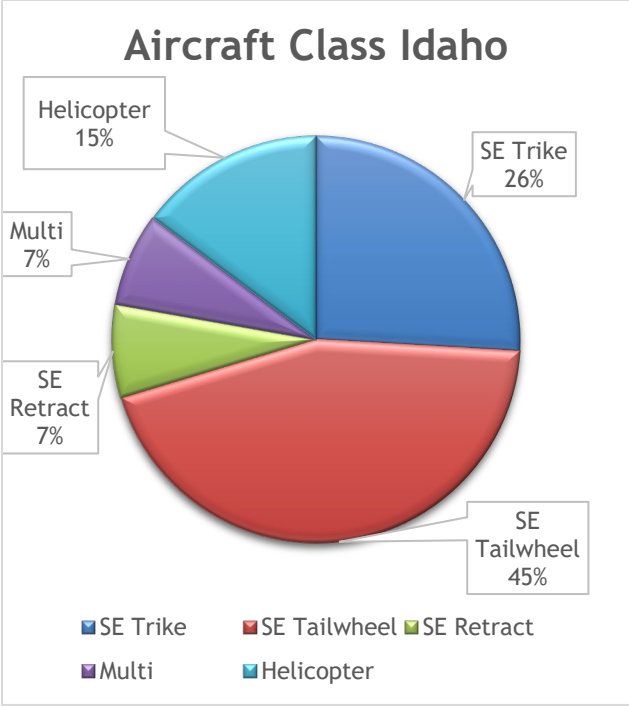


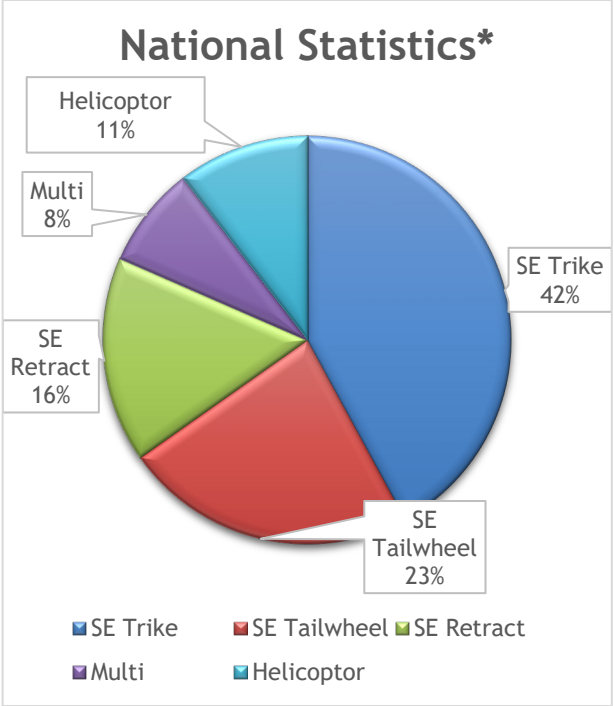
Accidents occur in all age groups and at all levels of flight experience.

When looking at flight time, accidents are spread out across the spectrum of experience. Both low time and high time pilots had a high number of accidents.

Pilots over the age of 61 account for 24% of the accidents in 2023, and 37% in 2022. **This is lower than in previous years, when pilots over 61 made up more than half of the total.**

Cavanaugh Bay (66S)





**** From 34th AOPA Air Safety Institute Accident Report***

Idaho is above the national average for accidents in tailwheel aircraft.

Tailwheel aircraft were involved in 45% of all accidents in Idaho. Idaho regularly exceeds the national average for accidents in tailwheel aircraft. The latest national data from 2023 indicated 23% of single-engine fixed-wing accidents occurred in tailwheel aircraft.

Please respect and protect these special places.

- ✓ Be considerate of other backcountry users
- ✓ Safely reduce your noise signature
- ✓ Train at home — no touch-and-goes in the backcountry
- ✓ Pack it in / pack it out
- ✓ Use CTAF 122.9 — minimize chatter

theRAF.org

The Recreational Aviation Foundation preserves, improves, and creates airstrips for recreational access.

2023 ACCIDENT REVIEW

Review of Accidents

- Several fatal accident investigations from 2023 remain incomplete. Final NTSB analysis is pending. This breakdown is intended to provide preliminary insights by flight phase. (T) indicates a tailwheel aircraft. As in prior years, weather, terrain, and mechanical issues continue to challenge pilot decision-making, especially during landing and low-altitude operations.

Takeoff Accidents:

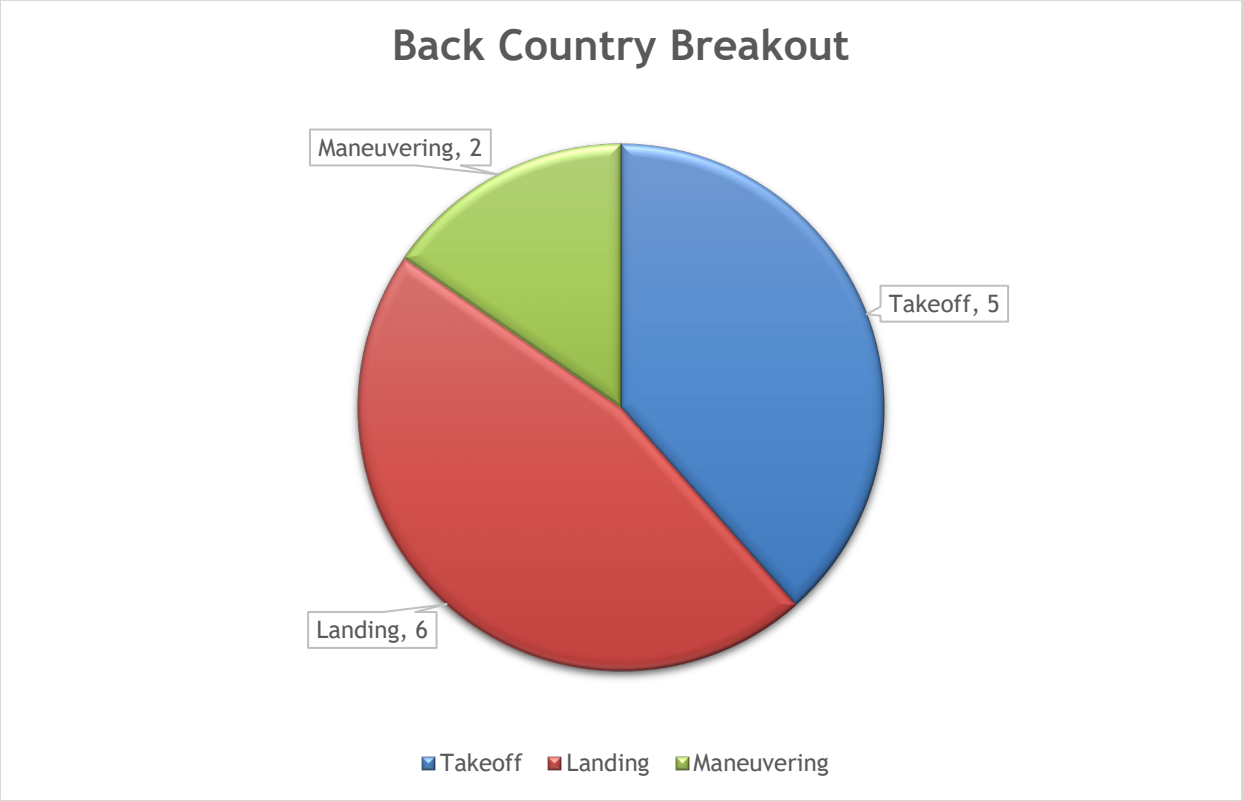
- **Loss of engine power** due to:
  - Fuel contamination (source undetermined).
- **Pilot control issues**:
  - Improper anti-torque pedal inputs in helicopter, leading to dynamic rollover.
  - Failure to maintain directional control during takeoff roll. (T)
- **Maintenance errors**:
  - Fatigue crack in landing gear spring due to corrosion from improper maintenance. **(T)**

Landing Accidents:

- **Directional control failures**:
  - Pilot failed to maintain control during gusting crosswind or tailwind **(T)**
  - Instructor delayed action during student's loss of control. **(T)**
- **Pilot decision errors**:
  - Improper fuel management leading to gear-up landings.

Maneuvering Accidents:

- **Instructor error**:
  - Failure to maintain airspeed during simulated turning autorotation.
- **Student pilot error**:
  - Premature flap retraction near stall speed.
- **Instructor oversight**:
  - Inadequate supervision and failure to regain control.



Thirteen of the accidents in Idaho in 2023 occurred in/around the mountains or at backcountry airstrips.

Takeoff Accidents

- Inadequately secured wires led to electrical grounding and engine failure. (T)
- Exhaust valve failure caused total engine power loss; source undetermined. Fatal
- Improper magneto torque and inspection caused partial engine failure. Fatal
- Loss of control during takeoff for undetermined reasons; trees contributed to impact. Fatal (T)
- Pilot failed to maintain clearance from trees in high-density altitude conditions.
- Go-around into rising terrain; pilot ignored published guidance and tailwind risks. Fatal

Landing Accidents

- Pilot failed to recognize wet grass surface, resulting in runway excursion and ground loop. (T)
- Improper brake use during rollout led to nose-over. (T)
- Loss of control during landing and failure to avoid snow berm during go-around. (T)
- Fatigue crack in landing gear caused loss of control during rollout.

Maneuvering Accidents

- Instructor failed to maintain airspeed during simulated turning autorotation, resulting in hard landing.

FOCUS FOR 2025: TAKEOFF, LANDING AND GO AROUND

At the Idaho Division of Aeronautics, our ongoing commitment remains unchanged: to provide the safest transportation system possible. Aviation carries inherent risks, and our goal continues to be zero fatalities. Just as we did last year, we use this report to pinpoint areas where targeted training can reduce risk. **In both 2022 and 2023, approximately 75% of accidents occurred during takeoff, landing, or go-around procedures**—a consistent trend that reinforces the need for focused improvement. By investing in better training, we not only reduce accidents but also help ensure aviation remains safe, enjoyable, and accessible for all.

Takeoff, Landing and Go-Around Training: As you practice, establish your personal limits for crosswind, tailwind and gusty-wind conditions.
From AOPA:
https://www.aopa.org/training-and-safety/students/takeoffs-landings-and-go-arounds
From the NTSB and FAA (includes links to training on FAA Safety)
https://www.ntsb.gov/Advocacy/safety-alerts/Documents/SA-060.pdf

VFR into IMC: 75% fatal: These accidents continue to kill pilots that find themselves in deteriorating weather and running out of options. Some excellent training material can be found at these links. One is a short video, the second a training class.

https://youtu.be/IkWhOBEUhZY?si=gYxhhwd-c0PeP94H

https://www.aopa.org/training-and-safety/online-learning/online-courses/weather-wise-vfr-into-imc

Risk Stacking: After the 2022 fatal accident at Burley, some thoughtful analysis on Risk Stacking was produced by AOPA's Air Safety Foundation.

https://www.aopa.org/training-and-safety/online-learning/accident-case-studies/risk-stacking

Trouble at Mile Hi: After helping with an aircraft emergency at Mile Hi we connected the pilot to the AOPA Air Safety Foundation, and they produced this two-part podcast. This is a great review of preparation for the Backcountry, surviving an accident in a remote area and dealing with the steps that follow. Episode 65 and 66.

https://www.aopa.org/news-and-media/podcasts/podcasts/there-i-was

FLYING RESOURCES

Idaho Division of Aeronautics
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/idahoaeronautics/
Webpage at https://itd.idaho.gov/aero/

Our webpage contains information on Idaho aircraft registration, the *Welcome to Flying Idaho* guide, this *IAASC Report*, and *Standard Operating Procedures* for some backcountry airstrips.

New Backcountry Safety Videos for Johnson Creek, Smiley Creek, and Stanley:
https://youtu.be/pBiZ3mqkQdE?si=CS2CWvvuKTsNu-M9
https://youtu.be/LK5htdPUuEI?si=_PNcKWjB4OX0QFB6
https://youtu.be/6LSfbwxoz20?si=BmNPPMyMPbJt_csH

New Idaho State Weather and Cameras
https://itd.idaho.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Aero-WebCam-Weather.pdf

Idaho Aviation Association
The Idaho Aviation Association gives Idaho a general aviation voice, both locally and nationally. Working to preserve Idaho's irreplaceable backcountry airstrips.

If you plan on flying in the backcountry, please get training as backcountry flying is very unforgiving. The Idaho Aviation Association has a listing of Instructors qualified to teach backcountry and tailwheel flying.
You can find them online at: https://idahoaviation.com/contact/

The AOPA Backcountry Resource Center is now online. This multi-state and multi-agency partnership is focused on providing quality resources and products to help you prepare for backcountry flying.
https://www.aopa.org/training-and-safety/air-safety-institute/backcountryresourcecenter

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