

Piper PA-24 Comanche 260 Model Guide

The Piper PA-24 Comanche 260 is a 4 to 6 seat, retractable-gear, low-wing, single-piston touring aircraft, listed in this library as built 1965 to 1972. Engines are the carburetted Lycoming O-540 or the fuel-injected IO-540. The supplied documents give no 260-specific performance or weight figures, so this guide covers variants and the inspection items a buyer should verify.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Serials: 24-4000 to 24-4299 (original 260), 24-4300 to 24-4803 (Comanche B), 24-4804 to 24-5028 (Comanche C). The Turbo C starts at 24-4904.
- Main gear side brace studs need a crack inspection at intervals of no more than 1,000 hours. Seven gear collapses were reported before the AD.
- Find out which alternate air system is fitted: manual heated, or spring-loaded automatic door. Worn door seals and hinges have caused engine failures.
- Ask for proof of the rudder balance weight kit (Piper P/N 760 705, Service Bulletin 362A) on serials 24-4000 to 24-5026.

VARIANTS AND ENGINES

Piper PA-24 Comanche 260 serials run 24-4000 to 24-5028. The original 260 is 1964-1965, the Comanche B 1965-1968 and the Comanche C 1969-1972, with a Turbo Comanche C from 24-4904. The type is all-metal monocoque. Production ended in 1972 when tooling at Lock Haven was damaged in a flood.

ENGINE INDUCTION: WHAT TO CHECK

The 260 may have a carburetted O-540 with a manual alternate air door, or a fuel-injected IO-540 (Bendix RSA servo) with a manual or a spring-loaded automatic door. Check the installed system against the flight manual and placards. Inspect the door, seals, springs and hinges at each periodic inspection.

AIRFRAME AND GEAR ITEMS

Check compliance with the side brace stud AD (inspection by fluorescent penetrant or magnetic particle method) and the rudder balance weights. Other items on the NZ AD schedule include the stabilator torque tube, landing gear extension bungee renewal, fuel tank drains and vents, and muffler inspections.

SAFETY NOTES

- An AAIB report describes a gear-up selection on the landing roll at about 30 kt groundspeed. The pilot reached for the gear switch instead of the flap switch. Identify the control before selecting.
- Oleo extension should be 2.75 inches per the service manual. Over-inflated oleos can reduce the anti-retraction switch protection, so check them preflight.
- Original 260 flight manual instructions for carburettor ice detection are unclear or missing, and manuals and placards can differ by engine type. Confirm the right supplement is aboard.