

Beat: Miscellaneous

Suicide suspected in small plane crash in northern Virginia

-, 24.07.2013, 05:04 Time

USPA News - A pilot who died in a small plane crash in northern Virginia on Monday may have crashed the aircraft deliberately in a suicide attempt, state police said on Tuesday as witnesses described seeing the plane nose dive straight into the ground. The accident happened at around 6:30 p.m. local time on Monday when a single-engine Cessna 172M aircraft crashed in a field near Shannon Airport in Fredericksburg, an independent city which is about 49 miles (79 kilometers) south of Washington, D.C. The pilot was the only person on board.

Sergeant Les Tyler, a spokesman for the Virginia State Police, said the small aircraft was flying in the air near the airport when it made a rapid descent and crashed into a field. "The impact of the crash caused the plane to catch fire," he said, adding that 22-year-old local pilot Edwin G. Hassel was the only person killed. People who witnessed the accident said they saw the aircraft dive straight into the ground, indicating the pilot may have crashed the aircraft deliberately in a suicide attempt. "He was about 2,000 feet (609 meters) up and took a nose dive straight into the ground. I'm just in shock, man," one witness told WTVR-TV. Tyler confirmed investigators are considering suicide as a possible cause of the crash but said an investigation is still underway. "State police are looking into suicide as being a factor in the cause of the crash," he said, adding that both the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) are also investigating. Deliberate crashes by suicidal pilots are extremely rare. The most notable example may be that of EgyptAir Flight 990 which crashed in the Atlantic Ocean off Massachusetts in October 1999, killing all 217 people on board. The NTSB concluded that the crash was caused by the relief first officer who disconnected the autopilot and pointed the aircraft nose-down while repeatedly saying "I rely on God."

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-1279/suicide-suspected-in-small-plane-crash-in-northern-virginia.html>

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UPA United Press Agency LTD
483 Green Lanes
UK, London N13NV 4BS
contact (at) unitedpressagency.com
Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619