



RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Pamela S. Sullivan
Aviation Accident Investigator
Central Region

Date: September 5, 2012
Person Contacted: Dean Minett - Pilot
NTSB Accident Number: CEN12TA604

Narrative:

Airborne for about 1 ½ hours on a routine fire detection flight.

10 – 12 minutes away from the airport at the time when he detected a faint “hot electrical” odor. No smoke at this time.

Looked outside to make sure the odor wasn’t external from the airplane. Alternator charging properly, no circuit breakers popped. There was enough of a smell to concern him.

Called the command center in Marquette and told them he was heading back to the airport.

Flew the traffic pattern for runway 11 at Newberry. On final approach when 400 to 500 feet from the runway, stabilized approach, power mostly off, 65 mph, full flaps. The air was a little choppy and there was some convection turbulence in the area.

A puff of smoke that was about twice the size of a basketball that rapidly came from under the instrument panel on the right side. This momentarily distracted him. At almost the same time, the airplane hit turbulence that was severe enough that he hit his head on the ceiling and everything that was on the seats was thrown forward. The turbulence extended his distraction.

When he looked forward and turned his attention back to the airplane, the nose was down and he could only see grass out of the windscreen. The airplane immediately hit the ground.

The nose gear broke off and the airplane slid forward up onto the runway. It continued to slide about 200 feet before it stopped. By time the airplane came to a stop, there were flames coming

up into the cockpit. He suspected the flames were at least in part from damage sustained in the impact.

He was able to exit the airplane at which time he noticed his legs were burned.

The airplane was coming up on a 100 hr inspection. A radio was installed in the airplane within the last month or so.