

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT WITNESS STATEMENT

NAME:

KRISTINA NOEL

DATE OF BIRTH:

8/23/70

ADDRESS:

VERONA, WI 53593

PHONE:

(Night) SAKE

EMPLOYER:

HOMEMAKER

(Title)

N/A

Please circle the answers to the following questions:

1. Were you an occupant on board the aircraft? YES NO
If yes, were you:
a. the pilot, co-pilot, flight instructor? Were you compensated? YES NO
b. a passenger? Were you compensating the pilot, owner, or operator of the aircraft for this flight? YES NO
If you were not on board the aircraft, where were you located? N/A
2. Did you receive any injuries? YES NO (If yes, please describe).
3. If you were injured, do you have health insurance for your medical expenses from the accident? YES NO N/A
If yes, and you have applied for or received benefits, please provide the name of your medical insurance carrier:
4. Do you have Medicare or Medicaid coverage for any of your medical expenses arising from the accident? YES NO N/A
If yes, have you applied for, received or expect to receive payments from Medicare or Medicaid? Please explain on the reverse of this form.

PLEASE DESCRIBE WHAT HAPPENED:

(see attached)

(SIGNATURE)

(if necessary)

(DATE)

3/9/20

Any person who, with intent to defraud or knowing that he is facilitating a fraud against an insurer, submits an application or files a claim containing a false or deceptive statement is guilty of insurance fraud.

Passenger Narrative of Flight

On Monday, January 27, 2020, I was riding as a passenger, although I hold a private pilot certificate and instrument rating, during a flight conducted under instrument flight rules (IFR) from Aspen-Pitkin County Airport (KASE) to Eagle County Regional Airport (KEGE) in a Cirrus SR22T model aircraft, registration number N288WT.

The weather in the afternoon was predicted to improve to marginal visual flight rules (VFR), so we went to the airport earlier in the day to prepare and pack the plane. We began brushing snow off the airplane while we waited for the weather to improve. The pilot-in-command (PIC) asked me to get an extension cord from the fixed base operation (FBO) to plug in the engine heater, which I did. After plugging in the engine heater, we finished clearing the snow from the aircraft. I walked around the aircraft and all surfaces were clear of snow and ice. I noticed that the pitot tube was still warm from the previous inspection by the PIC.

Upon entering the aircraft, I observed the PIC complete a thorough pre-flight check, and then start the engine. I verbally confirmed with the PIC and observed that the pitot heat and TKS de-icing system were turned on. We waited for the wings to be fully wetted-out, which took a few minutes. I was working the radios. During this time, I obtained the IFR clearance from the air traffic control (ATC) tower, and we were cleared to taxi to runway 33. The TKS and pitot heat remained on the entire time.

We were cleared for the LINDZ NINE standard instrument departure (SID), which was loaded into the autopilot. We were then cleared for take-off. Almost immediately after rotation, while we were airborne, the airspeed indicator on the primary flight display (PFD) blanked out and a big red "X" came across the screen. At that time, the PIC indicated that we would turn back to land at Aspen, so I advised the tower controller.

The tower asked if we had the terrain in sight. At that moment, since we were still flying in visual meteorological conditions (VMC) with the terrain in sight, we were cleared to land on runway 15. Shortly thereafter, we entered the clouds and instrument meteorological conditions (IMC).

Around the same time, the airplane speed alert system started squawking loudly "STALL, STALL, STALL". Since we no longer had the terrain in sight, the PIC safely did not continue the turn back to the airport, and radar vectors were requested from the tower. Tower initially advised a right turn to heading 270. However, upon confirmation of entering IMC, the PIC decided to climb to safe altitude. ATC issued a right turn to a heading of 300 degrees and a climb to 11,600 ft.

Around this time, the aircraft terrain alert system was alarming loudly "TERRAIN, TERRAIN. PULL UP, PULL UP". The PIC attempted several times during the flight to engage the autopilot, but it was non-functional, assuming now because there was no airspeed indicator. The PIC stated he would pull the Cirrus Airframe Parachute System (CAPS). We were in mountainous terrain, in IMC, with all the aircraft alerts systems squawking with big red "X's" across the screen, with no airspeed indicator, and hand-flying without an autopilot.

Pulling the CAPS seemed to be the only viable option. Once CAPS deployed, I informed the tower that we had pulled the chute. As the parachute filled with air, we were in a nose-down attitude.

As we descended below the clouds, we were looking directly at the top of the Aspen trees below. The aircraft slowed dramatically as it transitioned to a level flight attitude. Seconds later, the aircraft settled onto the mountainside with minimal impact.

If the PIC had decided to pull the CAPS system 30 seconds later, we would have impacted the ground in a nose-down attitude at a much faster speed. The decision to gain altitude, as well as the timing of CAPS deployment, was crucial to allow the parachute to fully open, and permit us to walk away from the accident uninjured.

We remained in contact with the Aspen tower throughout the sequence and let them know that we landed without injury. ATC alerted the rescue team and sheriff's office, whom we were able to communicate with by cell phone.

We remained inside the aircraft until the rescue team arrived hours later. We safely exited the aircraft from the cabin doors and hiked down the mountain.