

2022-09-13

TO: FAA Inspector Joanna Spiekermeier
Josh Lindberg, NTSB

FROM: Curtis Johnson
Stanton Airfield Volunteer
[REDACTED]

CC: John Quilling
Stanton Airfield Manager

I witnessed an aircraft crashing at Stanton Airfield this evening at approximately 6:45pm CDT. The incident occurred during the regular meeting time of the Stanton squadron of the Civil Air Patrol, and on this evening the squadron was hosting an open house for the local community to come out and learn more about CAP. I was doing my shift as a volunteer at Stanton (refueling aircraft, etc.) and participating in the open house (as a member of CAP).

I became aware of a couple aircraft in the pattern around 6:30pm, a Piper J-3 Cub and a Cessna 172 (I think), both utilizing runway 18. Winds were light out of the SSW. Both aircraft seemed to be landing, taxiing back, and remaining in the pattern.

Around 6:40pm I heard, then saw, an aircraft crossing the runway 36 threshold at about 50 feet above the runway seeming to do a low approach (based on the engine rpm). I was immediately concerned about this "opposite direction" traffic and the potential for conflict with other pattern traffic. I glanced at the approach end of runway 18 and noted the Cub was taxiing. I also noted the C172 seemed to be airborne anywhere near final approach.

Not sensing immediate conflict, I turned back to my activity with the open house. A few minutes later the same engine sound from the south end of the airfield caught my attention, and I noted the same aircraft in about the same position as it was previously, set up a little high over the approach end of runway 36, possibly to do another low approach. I glanced at the approach end of runway 18 and did not see any traffic conflict but started to walk toward the corner of the terminal building so I could get a better view of this fly-by. The terminal was blocking my view of the mid-portion of the active runway.

Just as I started walking I heard the rpms reduce on the aircraft, and I became concerned this aircraft was going to land opposite direction of other traffic AND with a tailwind (and he seemed a little high for a normal approach angle). Only a few seconds passed and I heard – but did not see – a loud "crunch".

I ran to the airport's Kabota utility vehicle and proceeded to the scene while calling 911. When I arrived, only one person was at the aircraft. I asked if he was the only occupant (YES) and if he

is hurt (NO). I checked him visually for any lacerations or other obvious trauma (NONE) and asked him to sit in the Kabota while help arrived. I checked fuel shutoff and electrical shutoff and got the pilot away from the aircraft until others arrived with fire extinguishers. Though extinguishers were not needed, several qualified pilots in our squadron verified the fuel and electrical systems off and inspected for possible fuel leaks. EMS responded within minutes.

I did take photographs at the scene, both immediately after EMS arrived and was attending to the pilot and later after the scene had quieted down.

████████████████████ Let me know if you need anything else from me.

Curt Johnson