

N245T SBS Accident Witness Statement Summaries

Provided by FAA Inspector Jason Jones, DEN FSDO

Witness #1 – Adam Conkling, SBS FBO Employee, CFI, Monitoring UNICOM Frequency

Interviewed on 6/19/2024 at 09:00.

Witness stated that while monitoring the SBS UNICOM frequency at approximately 16:20 MDT., N245T called in a 4-mile final for RWY 14. A few moments later N245T called in again, with only a partial call sign that was audible, then un-keyed the mic. After about 60 seconds had passed, the witness thought that N245T should have already landed and made another call. At about the same time the witness looked out of the FBO window facing south toward the approach end of RWY 32, felt a “thud” (thought that it might have been an explosion) then saw smoke and immediately called 911. During all monitored transmissions on the UNICOM frequency, the pilot of N245T did not declare an emergency, made no distress calls, and the witness did not hear any ambient sounds or engine noise, nor did he hear panic or distress in the pilot’s voice. Witness noted that the Density Altitude at the time was 10,000 feet and the reported winds were 220°@20KTS gusting to 30KTS.

Witness #2 – JD Reed, Atmos Energy Employee

Interviewed on 6/19/2024 at 11:30.

Witness stated that he got home from work at approximately 16:15 and was sitting in his vehicle outside of his apartment located on Copper Ridge Spur, approximately 1 mile from the West Acres Trailer Court. Witness was able to see the SBS airport from the parking spot. After sitting in his vehicle for a few moments, the witness saw an airplane “spiraling” toward the ground. The witness stated that the airplane appeared to have a slightly nose down pitch and looked like it was “oscillating” while spiraling. The witness did not hear anything, because his vehicle’s windows were up. He did not see any smoke coming from the airplane before impact.

Witness #3 – Scott Middleton, ATP, CFI, 2,000 Hrs. flying Twin Cessna 414 and 9,000 total hrs.

Interviewed on 6/19/2024 at 12:35.

Witness stated that while driving on Route 129 at approximately 16:20 he noticed an airplane flying in an irregular pattern for its type, at that airport. Witness initially thought that the pilot might have been trying to avoid Emerald Mountain. When the witness pulled over to observe what was happening, he noticed that the plane had missed the approach for RWY 14 and was setting up for a modified base for RWY 32 at about a ¼ of a mile and 1,000 to 2,000 AGL and appeared to be flying very slow. When the airplane was near the approach end of RWY 32, the

pilot started to turn downwind to base, heading toward town, momentarily leveled the wings, then made a hard left bank (approximately 60°) which caused the airplane to enter a snap spin/stall rotating counterclockwise. The airplane completed approximately 4 revolutions in a vertical attitude until it impacted the ground. The witness did not hear anything because his windows were up, and he did not see any smoke coming from the airplane. The witness also suggested that the NTSB and FAA could reach out to the Twin Cessna Flight Instructors at SIMCOM Aviation Training in Scottsdale, AZ if further detailed explanations were needed regarding the handling of the Twin Cessna 421C in an emergency or one engine operating condition.