

Inspector Statement  
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Richmond FSDO EA21



8/19/19:

Responded to Tappahannock-Essex County Airport (KXSA) along with KLB to investigate an accident. NTSB was on scene. The pilot was not on scene at the time of our arrival, he was airlifted to the hospital with severe injuries. Inspected the damage to the aircraft and took photographs. Parts of the aircraft could not be photographed due to the position of the aircraft and condition of the swampy area at the location of impact.

Summary of the accident:

Who: Pilot, William D. Boswell, private pilot. Sole occupant.

What: on 9/19/19, I spoke with the pilot via telephone while he was in the hospital. The pilot reported a burning smell in the cockpit while enroute to Easton MD (KESA) from Richmond, VA (KRIC). He stated he began smelling the burning smell at approximately ten minutes after departing the Richmond airport. He also stated there were signs of smoke (clear or white smoke) coming from an unknown source. He stated there was "like an electrical smell" in the aircraft and ultimately began seeing smoke. He stated he could not identify the source of the smoke but it was coming out slowly. He notified ATC and advised them he was diverting to Tappahannock Airport. He had the airport in sight so he didn't load it into the GPS. He shut off the air conditioner to try to eliminate the source of smoke which did not solve the problem. He did not reference the emergency checklist for smoke elimination. On his first attempt to land at KXSA, he was too high and performed a go around. On the second attempt, he stated he was flying too fast and misjudged the distance and performed a second go around. After the go around and while climbing out to re-enter the pattern, the smoke increased so much that he could not see clearly. He elected to deploy the parachute. After the parachute deployed, the aircraft drifted into a wooded area. The aircraft impacted the tree and came to rest in a swamp. The pilot suffered severe injuries and the aircraft was destroyed.

When: August 19, 2019 at approximately 0344 am

Where: Tappahannock Airport – approximately 1/8 of a mile east of the airport in a wooded swamp area  
The pilot stated he was building time for his commercial certificate. He began flying on the day of the accident around noon and traveled to multiple airports. He only rested a few hours in Ohio and Richmond. He rented the aircraft from Trident Air for two weeks, from August 3-18, and was returning the aircraft to the facility.