



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Central Region – Arlington, Texas

RECORD OF CONVERSATION

Who: John Cendroski, United Regional Hospital-based paramedic

When: October 5, 2014

RE: CEN15FA003, Wichita Falls, TX

In an interview, Mr. Cendroski stated that he was a paramedic for Air Evac Lifteam and was based at United Regional Hospital. He was asleep in the crew-quarters based at the hospital's helipad when he was alerted of the inbound flight. He said he heard the helicopter approaching "then nothing." The lights in the crew-quarters then flickered for about 10 seconds before the hospital-based pilot came into his room and said that the helicopter may have crashed.

Mr. Cendroski said that when he got to the accident site, the flight nurse was lying on her back on the sidewalk screaming. The paramedic was on fire and about 10 feet away from the helicopter in the street. A bystander was using his shirt to put out the flames on the paramedic. The hospital-based pilot attended to the injured flight nurse and Mr. Cedroski ran over to the injured paramedic. He said the paramedic was alert and was aware that he was involved in an accident. The injured paramedic asked Mr. Cedroski to call his son. Mr. Cedroski said he would as he tried to put the flames out on the paramedic. Someone then said the helicopter was going to explode, so Mr. Cedroski picked the injured paramedic up, placed him on a gurney and took him to the emergency room. He did not talk to the injured flight nurse or pilot.

Mr. Cedroski said the helicopter never exploded but there were lots of sparks from the downed power lines. He said the wind at the time of the accident was from the south and flying into United Regional Hospital was a common helipad for the Duncan, Oklahoma, based-crew to fly in and out of. Mr. Cedroski said he had heard "lots of praise" about the accident pilot from his fellow paramedics prior to the accident.

Leah D. Yeager
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National Transportation Safety Board