

CONTINUATION SHEET

EVIDENCE:

<u>Item:</u>	<u>Quantity:</u>	<u>Description:</u>
01	13	Hand written statements from witnesses (Original copies).
02	01	Compact disc containing digital audio recordings of transmissions and phone calls of the incident (taken from dispatch radio archives).

* I placed the above items into an evidence locker at the Colorado River Station on 08/28/13.

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1) Critical Incident Log (2 pages)
- 2) Incident History Report Summary (3 pages)
- 3) Copies of Witness statements (13 pages)

DETAILS:

On Monday, August 26, 2013, about 1320 hours, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) U.S. Ranger Cortazar and I were at the Desert Sunlight Solar Project in Desert Center, California. Desert Center, California is a small community about 48 miles west of Blythe, California in the unincorporated area of Riverside County. Due to a rain storm the previous day, U.S. Ranger Cortazar and I were at the solar project conducting a BLM compliance check, and we were accompanied by Therese Carpenter who is the Environmental Manager at the Desert Sunlight Solar Project.

About 1326 hours, we were travelling southbound near the south east fence line at the Desert Sunlight Solar Project, in Ranger Cortazar's patrol unit. I saw a small fixed wing airplane flying in the sky about 1000 feet in the air, less than one mile from the southeast fence line of the solar project. The airplane started making erratic maneuvers in the air. The plane was travelling west and made a sharp U-turn and started heading east. U.S. Ranger Cortazar and Carpenter witnessed what I was seeing because we started to talk about the maneuvers the plane was making. The plane's wings started to dip downward side to side, exposing the top and belly of the plane, as we were looking at the left side while it was in the air southeast of our location. The nose of the plane started to move downward toward the ground and abruptly maneuvered back upward toward the sky as it was still in an easterly direction. The plane started a second nosedive toward the ground, and turned counter clockwise exposing the top of the plane to our view before it crashed into the ground. The airplane crashed into the ground approximately three tenths of a mile southeast of the Desert Sunlight Solar Project southeast fence line. I could not see the airplane from the solar site after the airplane crashed because the desert foliage was too high, but I could see black smoke coming from the area where we lost sight of the airplane. I radioed dispatch, advising an airplane crashed and requested dispatch to contact Cal Fire to respond.

U.S. Ranger Cortazar drove me back to my patrol unit. U.S. Ranger Cortazar and I drove south on Kaiser

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1 Road to a power line road about one mile south of the southern fence line of the solar project. U.S. Ranger
2 Cortazar and I started to drive east into the desert to get to the wreckage. Due to the terrain, I had to drive in
3 "four wheel drive" through the desert to get to the wreckage so I would not get stuck in the sand. U.S.
4 Ranger Cortazar and I got our units stuck in the sand about 300 yards from the crash site. U.S. Ranger
5 Cortazar and I had to run about 300 yards to get to the wreckage. U.S. Ranger Cortazar and I arrived at the
6 crash site about 1337 hours. The crash site was approximately one mile east of Kaiser Road in the desert.
7 There were about 30 to 50 solar project employees on scene attempting to extinguish the flames using hand
8 held fire extinguishers (20 small, 3 medium, and 3 large). Cal Fire personnel were on scene as well
9 attempting to extinguish the fire, but due to the terrain they were unable to drive their fire engine to the crash
10 site. American Medical Response (AMR) personnel arrived on scene a short time after me to treat survivors
11 if any were located. This particular AMR unit is assigned to the Desert Sunlight Solar Project as part of a
12 safety requirement for the solar site.

13
14 U.S. Ranger Cortazar gave me grid coordinates to the crash site. The Coordinates are as follows: N 33
15 47.730/ W 115 22.865. For further information regarding U.S. Ranger Cortazar's involvement in this
16 incident refer to BLM case number LM13022928.

17
18 After the majority of the flames were extinguished, I assigned an area about 150 to 200 feet southwest of the
19 crash site as the command post (CP). I instructed everyone to move away from the wreckage and meet at the
20 CP. I secured about a 100 foot perimeter (radius) around the wreckage with yellow Sheriff's tape. No solar
21 project employees came forward when U.S. Ranger Cortazar asked if anyone had any injuries resulting from
22 this incident, therefore I believe no one was injured.

23
24 About 1402 hours, I started a "Critical Incident Log" for this incident. For further information regarding the
25 "Critical Incident Log" refer to attachments.

26
27 A California Highway Patrol (CHP) helicopter landed shortly after I set the perimeter around the wreckage.
28 The pilot landed about 50 yards from the east perimeter of the wreckage. I spoke to CHP Sergeant Cannon,
29 who is a pilot for CHP Air Operations, and he advised me he took aerial photographs of the wreckage.
30 Sergeant Cannon advised he will send the pictures to the Colorado River Station. I will complete a
31 supplemental report for the photographs when they are received.

32
33 About 1415 hours, Captain Wood, and Sergeant Velarde arrived on scene. Sergeant Velarde became
34 incident commander of the scene.

35
36 About 1420 hours, Investigators Espinoza and Smothermon arrived and assumed the investigation, but I
37 continued to assist Investigator Espinoza in this investigation. For further information regarding this
38 investigation refer to Investigator Espinoza's supplemental report.

39
40 I obtained names of four witnesses who were still at the CP after the perimeter around the wreckage was
41 established. All other solar project employees were directed by their supervisors to return to the solar site
42 before I was able to interview them. The four witness names are as follows: Adam Ruelas, Charles
43 Anderson, Scott Januscheski, and Randy Lawler. All four witnesses advised they saw the airplane making
44 erratic maneuvers while the airplane was flying in the air, and they saw the airplane nosedive into the

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1 ground. All four witnesses responded and assisted Cal Fire in attempting to extinguish the flames.

2
3 I met with Sergeant Velarde and he told me he spoke to Charles Anderson, who is a Desert Sunlight Solar
4 Project supervisor. Anderson identified the pilot and passenger as Michael Cyr and Jeffrey Randall.
5 Anderson told Sergeant Velarde Cyr and Randall were employees of the Desert Sunlight Solar Project. The
6 victims were tasked with taking aerial photographs of the solar project to assess the damage the storm had
7 caused.

8
9 About 1548 hours, Riverside County Deputy Coroners Drafton and Comstock arrived on scene with their
10 supervisor Sergeant Townsend.

11
12 About 1627 hours, Riverside County Forensics I.D. Technicians Pablo and Arbullo arrived on scene to
13 process the crash site for evidence.

14
15 About 1630 hours, U.S. Ranger Cortazar handed me hand written statements from 13 solar project employee
16 witnesses who saw and responded to the crash. I read the hand written statements, and most of the witnesses
17 believed the airplane's engine stalled and the airplane nosedived towards the ground. Witnesses also stated
18 they heard the engine attempting to restart before the airplane crashed into the ground. For further
19 information regarding solar project employees statements refer to the handwritten statements (Attachment 3).

20
21 About 1810 hours, Investigator Howard Plagens, an investigator for the National Transportation Safety
22 Board (NTSB) arrived and conducted an investigation of the crash. For further information regarding
23 Investigator Plagens' investigation refer to NTSB case number WPR13FA388.

24
25 About 1819 hours, Roderick Ealy, a safety inspector for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), arrived
26 and conducted an investigation of the crash. For further information regarding Ealy's investigation refer to
27 FAA case number WP21201303875.

28
29 After FAA Investigator Ealy and NTSB Investigator Plagens concluded their investigations, Riverside
30 County Deputy Coroner Sergeant Sechrest took over the investigation. The victims were subsequently
31 removed from the wreckage. Refer to Riverside County Coroners case numbers 2013-07803 (Cyr) and
32 2013-07804 (Randall).

33
34 A copy of this report will be forwarded to investigations for follow up.

35
36 **CASE STATUS:** Open/CA-2



First Solar
EMPLOYEE'S STATEMENT

Employee's Statement of Facts Regarding Accidents/Incidents

Date of Accident Incident: 26 Aug 2013 Place of Accident Incident: South Fence

EMPLOYEE'S STATEMENT

I was monitoring the desert tortoise perimeter fence repair along the south fence of the site. A plane approached from the east, rapidly descending, and then crashed down to the ground and immediately caught fire. The entire crew immediately responded by running to the crash. I was the third person to arrive at the burning plane. I saw two adults in the crashed plane, sitting side by side, but they were obviously dead and there fire was too out of control to approach the plane. We did not have any fire extinguishers, so we needed to wait for the responders from Kaiser Road to put the fire out. After that, we walked back to the construction site.

26 Aug 2013
Date

[Redacted]
Employee Badge Number

PK^a

[Redacted]
Employee's Signature

Kevin Walsh
Printed Name

[Redacted]
Las Vegas, NV 89123

Witnessed By [Redacted]

FS/ Safety mgr



First Solar
EMPLOYEE'S STATEMENT

Employee's Statement of Facts Regarding Accidents/Incidents

Date of Accident/Incident: _____ Place of Accident/Incident: _____

EMPLOYEE'S STATEMENT

Lined area for the employee's statement, containing faint handwritten text.

Date
[Redacted]

Employee Badge Number

[Redacted]
Employee's Signature

Printed Name
[Redacted]

Witnessed By: [Redacted]

FS/Safety Mgr



First Solar
EMPLOYEE'S STATEMENT

Employee's Statement of Facts Regarding Accidents/Incidents

Date of Accident/Incident: 8/26/13 Place of Accident/Incident: Desert Center NV

EMPLOYEE'S STATEMENT

I was out doing farm to the fence in
a plane of 500 ft in the air then
I heard people saying plane is going
down plane crashed in desert to the
fence crew started to run to where
plane was by the time we got
there fire was on for a while
lot of people went to help to put
out fire we were using dirt and
fire ~~ext~~ extinguishers from what I saw
plane engine stopped then plane lost
control going face down.

8/26/13
Date

[Redacted]
Employee's Signature

[Redacted]
Employee Badge Number

Serg Barrera
Printed Name

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Witnessed By: [Redacted]

FSP/ Safety Mgr



First Solar
EMPLOYER'S STATEMENT

Employee's Statement of Facts Regarding Accidents/Incidents

Date of Accident/Incident: 8-26-13 Place of Accident/Incident: _____

EMPLOYEE'S STATEMENT

I TURNED AROUND WHEN I HEARD ENGINE DIE
THEY GLIDED BACK AROUND TURNING IN A CIRCLE
I THOUGHT THEY WERE PLAYING THE ENGINE CAME
ON FOR A SECOND, THEN ~~THE~~ ~~PLANE~~ THE PLANE
NOSE DIVED TO GROUND ABOUT 200 TO 300 METERS
FROM US. WHILE THEY WERE CHECKING IF WE CAN
GO HELP I WAS GONE. I WAS THE FIRST ~~ONE~~
ONE THERE IT LOOKED TO ME THAT THEY WERE
~~DOWN~~ D.O.C. MADE EVERYONE ~~ON~~ STAY BACK
A LOOK FOR ANYBODY ELSE. THERE WAS
NOTHING I COULD DO, THEY WERE IN FLAMES
WE HAD NO FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

[REDACTED]
COACHELLA, CA 92236

Date: 8-26-13

PK # [REDACTED]
Employee Badge Number

[REDACTED]
Employee's Signature
JUAN SANCHEZ
Printed Name Post CREW.
S.R.T.

Witnessed By: [REDACTED]

F. SANCHEZ



First Solar
EMPLOYEE'S STATEMENT

Employee's Statement of Facts Regarding Accidents/Incidents

Date of Accident/Incident: 26 Aug 2013

Place of Accident/Incident: 2107 E. 11th
Little Rock

EMPLOYEE'S STATEMENT

I was working on the side of the plane when I looked up to see a plume and so I heard a popping noise from the plane. The plane stalled out and almost turned around and began to spiral towards the ground. It hit the ground me and a few others began to run towards the plane. Me and another coworker were the first 2 responders. The plane was engulfed in flames we ran to the driver side rear and saw 2 persons. We got as close as we could. They within 2 to 3 feet they were not moving or breathing about 2 min when fire others showed up we got fire extinguishers and began to put out the flames. Soon more people were coming in through the road. ~~See and that's~~ when the sheriff's showed up.

26 Aug 2013
Date

[Redacted]
Employee Badge Number

[Redacted]
Employee's Signature

Joseph Muir
Printed Name

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

F/Safety Manager



First Solar
EMPLOYEE'S STATEMENT

Employee's Statement of Facts Regarding Accidents/Incidents

Date of Accident/Incident: 8/22/13

Place of Accident/Incident: South of project

EMPLOYEE'S STATEMENT

While doing turtle lanes remediation I noticed a small plane heading west. A few seconds later I noticed it turning, which looked kind of odd when it made an abrupt change of direction. It seemed to level out for a moment before going nose down. At that point I knew something was really wrong and then it impacted the ground. We radioed what we just saw and ran over to try and assist.

DLB

8/22/13

Date

[Redacted]

Employee Badge Number

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Employee's Signature
David Georgulas, Jr

Printed Name

[Redacted]

Desert Center CA
92239

Witnessed By:

[Redacted]



First Solar
EMPLOYEE'S STATEMENT

Employee's Statement of Facts Regarding Accidents/Incidents

Date of Accident/Incident: 8-26-13 Place of Accident/Incident: _____

EMPLOYEE'S STATEMENT

Working near center of South Fence Heard
a plane's engine cut out then turned to see the
Plane, which was south-east of my position, make
a hard turn to its right. The plane continued
to circle once or twice then did a circle dive
to the ground. Then rushed east along the fence line.
Black smoke started to rise from the spot of the crash.
With the assistance of co-workers I got a fire
extinguisher and ran towards the crash. When I
got there the plane was still on fire I used up
my fire extinguisher, which was small. The
fire continued until others came with more.
We were then instructed to make our way from the
area back to the fence.

8-26-13
Date

Employee Badge Number

Employee's Signature

Michael Clines
Printed Name

Witnessed By: _____

FSI Safety Mgr

Bermude Dunes
cd 922034



First Solar
EMPLOYEE'S STATEMENT

Employee's Statement of Facts Regarding Accidents/Incidents

Date of Accident/Incident 8-26-13 Place of Accident/Incident: DEERT CENTER CA

EMPLOYEE'S STATEMENT

I saw the airplane flying by looked up took a glance and as I turned away I heard the engine go off looked up again and noticed the airplane had made a turn going the opposite way from where it was coming (going west and then turned east from that then it took a nose dive heard the plane tried to turn back on but couldnt later that the plane impacted the ground. My crew and I ran to the crash site to see if we could help and as we got there by foot the plane was already in flames and you could see two bodies next to each other shortly after our arrival rescue team showed up with fire extinguishers and we also threw dirt on burning plane to help put out the fire.

8-26-13
Date

[Redacted Signature]
Employee's Signature

766-409-5176
Employee Badge Number

Francisco A. CERDAS
Printed Name

Address: [Redacted] Thousand Oaks CA 92270

DOB: [Redacted]

WITNESSED BY:

[Redacted]



First Solar
EMPLOYEE'S STATEMENT

Employee's Statement of Facts Regarding Accidents/Incidents

Date of Accident/Incident: 8-26-13 Place of Accident/Incident: 1

EMPLOYEE'S STATEMENT

I Tony Gonzalez was working on the south Bruce line when I heard a plane flying over. I looked up and watched it for about a minute and then I heard the engine stop I thought maybe they were playing with us then it started to go down. As I watched it some more I knew they weren't play then the plane hit the ground I tried to call it in then I started running, I got there and there was nothing we could do for them

[Redacted signature area]

8-26-13
Date [Redacted Signature]
Employee's Signature

[Redacted]
Employee Badge Number Tony Gonzalez
Printed Name

[Redacted]
Witnessed by: [Redacted] Safety Mgr
By the CA
92225



First Solar
EMPLOYEE'S STATEMENT

Employee's Statement of Facts Regarding Accidents/Incidents

Date of Accident/Incident: 8/26/13 Place of Accident/Incident: Approximately 3000 ft south of subject site

EMPLOYEE'S STATEMENT

#2 man standing in First Solar parking lot talking with DJ McMeiron, out of corner of my eye saw small plane drop out of control. Looked to almost save itself, then nose dived and crashed nose first into ground. Black smoke started quickly to top. DJ called it in on emergency channel on radio.

DON COPELAND

CORONA, CA 92531

8/26/13
Date

[Redacted]
Employee Badge Number

[Redacted Signature]
Employee's Signature

DON COPELAND
Printed Name

Witnessed By: [Redacted]

FS/Safety mgr



First Solar
EMPLOYEE'S STATEMENT

Employee's Statement of Facts Regarding Accidents/Incidents

Date of Accident/Incident: 26 Aug 2013

Place of Accident/Incident:

Desert
Sunlight
BLM Land
South of Site

EMPLOYEE'S STATEMENT

At approximately 13:20 (1:20 PM), a small model airplane crashed into the desert (BLM Land) south of the Desert Sunlight project and near an existing power line structure. The aircraft had been flying near the site, executing a variety of aerial maneuvers before executing a fatal nosedive. I placed a call over channel 5 (Logistics) stating a plane crash had occurred and requested immediate assistance from medical, police, and rescue personnel. An emergency alarm was activated to scramble personnel to the scene of the incident. I was in contact with a coworker who informed me there were some people trapped in the wreckage, and that it was on fire. I advised him not to enter the fire and that help was on the way.

DJ Moran

Desert Center, CA 92239

26 August 2013
Date

[Redacted Signature]
Employee's Signature

[Redacted Badge Number]
Employee Badge Number

DJ Moran
Printed Name

Witnessed By [Redacted Name]

[Redacted Signature]



First Solar
EMPLOYEE'S STATEMENT

Employee's Statement of Facts Regarding Accidents/Incidents

Date of Accident/Incident: 8/26/13 Place of Accident/Incident: _____

EMPLOYEE'S STATEMENT

I James Callaghan was working directly across from the incident when it happened. I was the first to announce the accident over the radio I then reported this is not a joke the following is an accurate & detailed description of what I saw, and heard. I stopped my utility cart along the # South-East-West fence. I along with 3 of the 4 individuals in my cart heard a scuttling popping noise from directly behind us in the air I turned my head to the south to see a plane scuttling & nose diving into the desert about 1/4 to 1/8 of a mile away. I immediately announced it on the supervisor Radio within minutes the plane was fully engulfed & I began handing fire extinguishers to the guys breaching the fence to assist. If you have any questions please feel free to call me at [REDACTED]

Date

Employee Badge Number

Employee's Signature

Printed Name

Witnessed By

[REDACTED]
FS/Safety Mgr

[REDACTED]
814116 CA,
92225
[REDACTED]



First Solar
EMPLOYEE'S STATEMENT

Employee's Statement of Facts Regarding Accidents/Incidents

Date of Accident/Incident: 8-26-13 Place of Accident/Incident: BLM land south of solar project

EMPLOYEE'S STATEMENT

I was in a group of workers fixing the south turtle fence when a small aircraft silver/gray in color flew over head about 150 yards high banked left and sounded like motor was losing power and made a loud pop then started to lose altitude fast nose dove and hit the ground about 3/4 - 1 mile south of Desert Sun light solar project, when the plane crashed I and the 3 people near the fence of one on scene both people's done deceased when I arrived took no more than 5 minutes to get their from project on foot in full sprint also the plane started to smoke nite when it hit the ground no parts ~~was~~ appeared to fall off sounded like engine failure.

[Redacted] RD, Blythe, CA
DOB [Redacted] 1987

8-26-13
Date

[Redacted Signature]
Employee Signature

R# [Redacted]
Employee Badge Number

Thomas E. [Redacted]
Printed Name

Witnessed By: [Redacted]
FS/Safety Mgr