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NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

WASHINGTON, D.C.

SURVIVAL FACTORS GROUP CHAIRMAN FACTUAL REPORT

Attachment 4 -Emergency Response Written Statements

(5 Pages)

Training Coordinator
Waller-Harris Emergency Service District 200 - Station 71

At 10:01 on October 19, 2021, Station 6, Station 71, Station 61, Medic 6, and Medic 5 were dispatched to 1900 Cardiff at the Houston Executive Airport, Runway 36 for a helicopter crash. I was the officer in charge of engine 6. Approximately 2 minutes after the alarm Engine 6 was enroute from the station. engine 6 headed westbound on Stockdick School Road towards Pitts. Over the radio, engine 71 requested additional resources from Katy FD. Waller County 1300 came over the radio to ask engine 6 what additional units will be needed. I responded to stand by as I was not on scene yet. The radio traffic continued with dispatch calling engine 6 to confirm what additional units will be needed. At that time 1300 advised when the first unit arrived on scene to give a report and ensure command was established. When Engine 6 approached Pitts Road I was able to see a large black column of smoke in the sky coming from the southwest direction. Another crew member and I were donning our PPE. We traveled southbound on Pitts Road and then headed west on Morton Rd. As we approached 2855, the smoke column was getting larger, and units were all starting to arrive at the intersection. Police were already at the intersection directing traffic for emergency vehicles. Engine 71 arrived on location. A unit came over the radio advising it was not a helicopter it was a plane. Station 61 arrived on location. Engine 6 arrived on location at approximately 10:15 behind Tanker 6. Brush pump 6 was already on location approximately 2 minutes before engine 6 advised it was a plane that was fully engulfed.

Driving west on Morton Road, brush pump 6 passed us going eastbound. We ended up parking behind tanker 6 which was approximately 100 feet from the road entry to the plane's location. The driver placed the unit in park. I exited the engine with the driver and walked towards the entrance of the crash. I looked back to see that another firefighter was still in the engine waiting on orders. I witnessed the tail end of a plane fully involved, the engines were still running, the body of the plane was in flames and hardly anything left of it and vegetation leading up to the plane was on fire. Pieces of the plane were located along the right side of the road next to the apparatuses as well as cut trees all over the ground. The power lines were laying on the ground to the right of the apparatus as well. On the left side were multiple personal vehicles from the airport. The driver and I walked up to command to receive orders. Command was the chief from station 71. I witnessed crews trying to pull 2½ inch hose lines off engine 71. The driver and I assisted with laying of the lines. I advised the driver to watch out for the down power lines as he stretched the hose out down the dirt roadway leading to the airplane. Once completed, I returned to command. A captain from station 6 and I were instructed to set up a water supply. We returned to tanker 6 and engine 6 to quickly discuss the course of action needed. All vehicles were instructed to be removed to open the roadway for incoming apparatus. Katy FD arrived on location and parked right behind us. The driver, operator and crew came over to assist in the set-up. Once completed they reported to command. Additional firefighters and chief staff started to arrive walking right past us. Water supply was then established, and relay pumping was accomplished.

Firefighter Vollmering
Waller-Harris Emergency Service District 200 - Station 71

On October 19, 2021, while at my residence at 1001hrs, the fire department I volunteer for, station 71, was dispatched to a helicopter crash at Houston executive airport, which was later corrected to a plane crash. After I heard the call go out, I immediately went to look out the back window of my home which is directly across Interstate 10 from the airport and saw a large column of black smoke which appeared to be coming from just north of the airport itself. I gathered my firefighting gear and proceeded directly to the

scene. While enroute, radio traffic from Waller County sheriff office dispatch stated and confirmed a large plane had gone down in a field just north of the runway north of Morton Rd. From Cardiff Rd turning right or east onto Morton Road, approaching the site, I could see numerous vehicles as well as City of Katy law enforcement already there. Traveling east on Morton Road I came to group of cars parked in front of a gate which led to an open field just west of where the plane had come to a stop. In this field I could see numerous people walking to and from the plane which was already on fire.

About 1010hrs - after proceeding about 100ft further east on Morton rd. I came to a second gate which had a dirt road that led up to the plane. At that point, I parked and exited my vehicle, no other fire or EMS had arrived on scene by then. Upon exiting, I immediately could hear at least one engine of the plane still running and determined it was a jet by the sound of it. After a 360° walk around of the area I had parked in, I could see a large plane fully involved with fire about 300-400 ft north of Morton Road and across a dirt road leading north from the gate. Power lines which ran parallel with Morton Road on the north, had all been severed. Other than the plane on fire I saw a small cluster of trees smoldering which was located north of Morton Road just east of the dirt road leading up to the plane. From the smoldering trees just to the east of that, I then noticed where the earth itself had been altered which appeared to be what looked like large wheel tracks leading up to the plane.

About 1013hrs - engine 71(crew of 2 the chief and a firefighter) from the west and tanker 6, engine 6, and brush pump 6 from the east arrived on scene. Engine 71 established its position in front of the entrance to the gate and was set to be the initial attack pumper. This position was determined by the firefighter from engine71 due to the downed power lines and at the same time was also instructed to run 2.5-inch line down the dirt road to fight the fire. About 1018hrs - crew member from both engine companies pulled all the 2.5-inch line engine 71 had and proceeded towards the plane. The incident command chief went into the field where the plane was. I immediately started setting up engine 71 to pump, which included establishing water supply from tanker 6 and a foam supply.

About 1025hrs - I still unaware of the status of the people who were aboard the plane initially, started flowing water and foam to the first firefighters in. A second 2.5-inch line was attempted to be established on the fire ground from engine 71 but was never used. From this point forward, I lost track of time and was focused on pump operations. For at least the first hour or more of fire suppression, everything went very smoothly from the position I was assigned to. Command later notified me that Community Fire Department was enroute with their foam truck but until they arrived, engine 71 used 16 pails of Class A foam. Once Community engine 93 arrived on scene, fire suppression was halted to so that we could get tanker 6, engine 71, and Community engine 93 in sync to start pumping again which did not take but just a few minutes.

Around 1240hrs, most of the fire was extinguished and very little to no smoke coming from wreck site. At the same time, pump operations was moved over to Community engine 93 and engine 71 were shut down due to mechanical issue. About 1325hrs - I was relieved from the scene. Note, while on scene during fire suppressions. I witnessed what appeared to be an employee from the airport bring a piece of plane wreckage that had been laying west of the site on Morton Road by hand to command. He then was escorted back to where he found it and I assume placed it back where he found it. The piece looked to be part of the skin of the plane.

Firefighter Aguilar

Waller-Harris Emergency Service District 200 - Station 6

District 6 got paged to helicopter crash,
Got into Engine 6 and began gearing up,
Page went out that it was an airplane,
Arrived on scene and got off engine 6,
Walked over to chief Lyles asked what
he needed, was told help stretch hand lines
off E71, Assisted pulling down hose along
with another firefighter.

Fernando Aguilar
District 6

10/19/2021

Firefighter Smith

Waller-Harris Emergency Service District 200 - Station 71

I, Andre Smith, was the engine operator at the time of the incident October 19, 2021. The call was dispatched as a helicopter crash. When I walked out of the living quarters, I could visually see smoke. I followed Tender 6 and Booster 6 to the address given by dispatch. The Engine arrived behind Tender 6. I was initially told by my in charge to help assist Tender 71. I followed orders and assisted until I was told by the engine operator of 71 to bring foam to Booster 6. I carried one foam pale roughly 600 feet from Tender 6 all the way through the warm zone until I could see my crew member Initiating fire suppression. I assisted my crew member from Booster 6 with fire suppression of the aircraft. I did not see any victims. I saw down power lines, smoldering bushes, a damaged gate, a massive ditch of fuel that was dammed, and the engulfed aircraft. We used foam with a selectable gallonage nozzle from Booster 6 to cool off and penetrate the aircraft. We also sprayed hotspots to prevent wildfire incidents. Booster 6 has 300 gallons of water. When it was depleted, another plan was orchestrated. Tender 71's supply hose was dragged to the fire ground attached with a nozzle and a fire appliance. My crew member and I continued fire suppression until we were told by the incident commander to recycle our resources while another agency arrived into the hot zone. We quickly recycled and hurried back to assist with the other mutual aid departments. Other firefighters and myself were attaching additional hose to our attack line for more reach. With the new reach, refresh people, and foam application, the aircraft's fire was significantly reduced. We were told by incident command to rehab away from the hot zone. When I walked back, I was assisted by medic crews to get my vitals. My vital were good. I was told to rehab, drink fluids, and cool off.

Firefighter Jimerson

Waller-Harris Emergency Service District 200 - Station 71

Waller Harris ESD 200 Station 71 was dispatched to a Helicopter Crash in the area just north of Morton Rd, with a cross street of Cardiff Rd. Engine 71 and Booster 71 went en route and Engine 71 advised dispatch that we could see a column of smoke leaving the station. While en route dispatched advised if kathy was needed, E71 advised to dispatch Katy as Mutual Aid. E71 arrived on location, E71 Driver, Chief Liles took Command, E71 advised that there was a plane fully involved, FF A got out of the truck and advised that there were powerlines on the roadway, E71 A made his way to the plane to look for passengers and to get a better size up of the scene. E71 a was approached by a civilian saying that there were people in the field. E71 A relayed the info to command and found out that there was still one engine running. E71 personnel made the decision to stretch a 2 ½ inch line and have two attack lines, simulating an apartment lay. FF A stretched 2 ½ inch line almost all the way to the plane. Command was taken over by the director of the ESD, Chief Liles became field sector. Chief Liles met FF A and FF A advised that he needed and 1 ¾ crosslay to be brought down, Chief Liles requested the handline, but got no response. Chief Liles walked down and got one of the attack lines and brought to FF A. FF A attached the line to the 2 ½ inch line and signed to Field Sector Chief he was ready for water, E71 A began flowing water and foam to try and extinguish the fire. E71 B and A Katy firefighter came up and assisted E71 A in attacking the line. FF A gave the line to the kathy firefighter and began taking off gear next to field sector command. FF A saw another line not being used and sat on the line and flowed water and foam to cool the cockpit side of the plane. Field Sector command requested that we needed more personnel to come change out with the guys in the field. E71 A and E71 B requested that tools be brought to the field sector command to begin overhaul

and get ready to get better extinguishment on the fire. Once bulk of the flames were out, E71 and E71 B took pike poles towards the cockpit section and made small holes in the rubble to get the hose stream deeper into the rubble. E71 A, E71 B and Chief Liles where sent more personnel as replacements and All Station 71 personnel went to EMS to be check and into rehab.