



Memorandum of Record

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Central Region

Date: 10/22/20
Subject: WPR19LA066, Initial FAA ATC Findings

The following information was provided to NTSB investigators following an initial review by the FAA of ATC involvement with the accident pilot.

- Ellensburg (ELN) Airport weather was visibility 4 miles with haze and an overcast ceiling at 1,700 feet. PIREPs were not solicited within 1 ½ hours prior to the event due to lack of traffic. Light rime icing had been reported 100 miles north of the ELN Airport within the previous 2 hours. The traffic volume was described as light with normal complexity.
- The typical radar coverage near ELN is at or above 2,600 feet.
- There were 5 controllers working at the time of the event which included 1 Overall Controller in Charge (OCIC) in the tower providing general supervision and a TRACON CIC who was working the Radar Approach Control position.
- N14372 established communication with the controller after departing ELN and reported that he was in the clouds at 5,000 feet. The controller requested the altitude of N14372 a second time and the pilot reported that he was at 4,500 feet then requested vectors for the ILS Approach to the Yakima (YKM) Airport. The controller asked if N14372 was requesting an IFR clearance and there was no response. The controller again questioned the pilot to which there was a garbled response. The controller instructed N14372 to maintain VFR and issued a transponder code. N14372 did not respond. The controller attempted to relay through another aircraft without success. The controller observed the aircraft turning towards ELN and descending.
- A Position Relief Briefing occurred prior to the event. The relieved controller contacted the Fixed Base Operator (FBO) at ELN to inquire if N14372 had returned to the airport. The ATM briefed that the FBO does not monitor the Common Traffic Advisory Frequency (CTAF) and would not have heard any transmissions from the pilot returning to the airport. The FBO reported that N14372 had been there earlier in the day.

- The controllers assumed the aircraft had returned to ELN; therefore did not initiate an ALNOT or create an MOR for the event. The ATM stated it was the facility expectation that when a simultaneous loss of radar contact and radio communication with ATC occurs all information shall be relayed to Seattle ARTCC (ZSE) to initiate an ALNOT.
- Both controllers had received a mandatory briefing, which included directions for ALNOT procedures and included the mandatory use of the District ALNOT checklist located on CEDAR.
- The controllers were advised of the crash when the Regional Operations Center (ROC) called inquiring about N14372. The ATM stated that the ZSE ATM was notified and an MOR was filed the following day.