



## Fire Incident Report

### Fire/Building Safety

#### Prescott Fire Department Incident number 2020-000470

On January 22, 2020 at about 1829 hrs, I received information via Active 911 of a structure fire at Prescott Love Field Airport located at 1980 Clubhouse Drive. The information that was given was that there was structure fire behind Station 73. Reading further through the call I noted that an airplane was on fire. I continued to monitor the call and learned via the radio that the fire was actually on the other end of the airport near the airport administration building located at 6543 Crystal Lane and that additional units were being called in to assist. Due to these circumstances, I decided to respond to the scene.

I arrived at the airport at about 1915 hrs. I contacted the officers blocking off the entrance to the airport who directed me to the west side of the parking lot near airport administration. Upon arrival I observed a white three-engine airplane parked in front of a closed door hanger. I observed soot and burn marks on the window and door areas. An elevated master stream was being applied to the airplane as well as a master stream from the airport crash rescue truck.

I contacted Fire Marshal Devendorf who informed me that a possible malfunction occurred of the aircraft battery system while the engines were being tested which resulted in the fire. Chief Devendorf directed me to contact the crew whom were performing the tests to obtain their statements.

I went to the airport administration building and contacted Pilot Steve Crane and Engineers Jonathan "JJ" Johnson and Andrew Blanchard. I also identified the following technicians who were at the nose of the airplane at the time of the fire:

Bryce Aberg

Neil Manning

Jesse Stevens

Miguel Marmol

John Koenig

#### Interviews: Steve Crane, Jonathan Johnson and Andrew Blanchard

Steve Crane, Jonathan Johnson and Andrew Blanchard were in the plane at the time of the fire. Mr. Crane, who is a test pilot, was sitting in the front left seat in the cockpit. Next to him was Andrew Blanchard and behind Mr. Blanchard was JJ Johnson whose seat was facing backwards toward the rear of the plane. Mr. Crane explained to me that they had been testing the two wing engines off and on since noon. At about 1740 hrs, they started up the engines and continued to test them as they did all day. At about 1825 hrs, Mr. Johnson noticed a slight temperature rise of one of the battery cells, but said that it was still within normal operating temperatures. He got out of his seat and went to the

Bret Lucas IAAI-CFI  
Fire Inspector I/II  
Prescott Building Safety  
201 S. Cortez St  
Prescott, AZ 86303  
Office-928-777-1267

## **Fire Incident Report**

battery box. He felt the box noticing it was getting hot then he turned back and noticed gray smoke coming from under his seat. Mr. Johnson called out “smoke, smoke, smoke” and then “get out, get out, get out.” He then pushed the emergency stop button while Mr. Crane placed the engine throttles in neutral. All three then exited the plane via the port door.

All three crew members as well as the support crew members outside the plane said they were not injured.

### **Conclusions:**

Further examination of the aircraft is needed to be performed by qualified individuals in order to determine the exact sequence of events through which the fire started. At this point, the cause of the fire is undetermined.