

Las Vegas Boulevard: Small plane crash-lands on street

A small aircraft attempting to land at McCarran International Airport crashed Friday night on Las Vegas Boulevard South, where it collided with three vehicles, injuring one person.

The pilot of the Piper Archer single-engine plane told authorities that about two miles from McCarran he heard the engine sputter and die about 7:50 p.m., said Scott Allison, spokesman for the Clark County Fire Department.

The pilot thought the plane had run out of fuel and attempted to land in a vacant field west of Las Vegas Boulevard. But a strong gust of wind sent the plane crashing onto Las Vegas Boulevard, next to a gas station, just north of Warm Springs Road.

Three vehicles were struck by the airplane, which was registered to a New Mexico company.

One woman, who was traveling in a Cadillac Escalade that collided with the plane, was transported to University Medical Center with head and neck pain. Firefighters described the woman's injuries as minor.

The wing on the passenger side of the plane broke off and slammed into a pickup towing a boat northbound on Las Vegas Boulevard. A third vehicle also was struck by the plane.

Neither of those drivers was hurt.

Allison said the pilot, whom he described as very experienced, and his passenger were not injured. „Not a scratch on them,“ he said.

Allison said considering how busy Las Vegas Boulevard South normally is on Friday night, „this could have been a lot worse

than it was.“

One eyewitness said the plane's lights weren't on when it crashed.

„It sounded like two cars crashing in a head-on collision,“ said Wyatt Earp. „It's surreal; it's unbelievable.“

Earp said his biggest concern when he saw the crash was a fuel leak. But as he approached the crash scene to help, he saw no leak.

Earp, who used to work on planes, said he helped the pilot make sure the downed airplane's instruments were all turned off.

The pilot's name was not immediately released by authorities.

The Federal Aviation Administration Web site lists the plane, which was manufactured in 1979, as being owned by Trojan Aviation of Farmington, N.M.

FAA and National Transportation Safety Board officials were investigating the crash.

Las Vegas Boulevard South was expected to be closed late into Friday night while authorities investigated the crash, Allison said.