



## TRUCKEE TAHOE AIRPORT DISTRICT

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Office of the General Manager

# Aircraft Accident Update and Next Steps

**Date: August 19, 2021**

## Condolences

First and foremost, the Airport District would like to extend our condolences to those who had loved ones on the plane, and to those who were close to the tragedy on the ground.

We would also like to thank the first responders who quickly contained the situation, suppressed the fire, and who continue to investigate how the incident occurred.

As representatives of the Truckee Tahoe Airport District (Airport), we are deeply committed to maintaining a safe facility. In addition to regular safety checks, inspections, and upgrades, we have an extensive training program for our staff, and a robust outreach program to local and itinerant aircraft operators.

We are also deeply committed to being good neighbors. We welcome open conversations with our community, even difficult conversations. We operate transparently and we willingly share the regulations, processes, and access to meetings that guide our work. Regarding the accident that occurred on July 26th, 2021, we have the following updates.

**We want to let you know what will happen next and how your voice can be a guiding presence during this incident recovery effort.**

The following meetings will be opportunities for the public to ask questions and voice concerns with Airport Staff and the Board of Directors:

- On August 25th, the Board will host its regular monthly meeting. There will be an agenda item on the incident to allow people to speak with us
- Airport Staff is working on a community workshop tentatively scheduled for late September or early October to meet with residents to discuss issues related to aircraft operations, flight procedures, land use around the airport, flight safety programs, as well as our future airport master planning process. A date will be announced as soon as a date and location can be confirmed as well as meeting all COVID-19 protocols.

Information about Board meetings is available at:

[www.truckeetahoeairport.com/administration/board/meetings](http://www.truckeetahoeairport.com/administration/board/meetings).

Information about the Airport Community Team (ACT) is available at: [www.truckeetahoeairport.com/act](http://www.truckeetahoeairport.com/act).

**We want to share the incident details we have with you.**

*At 1:18 PM on July 26, 2021, a Challenger 605 twin jet aircraft, FAA registry number N605TR, crashed on approach to Runway 11 en route from Coeur D'Alene, Idaho. The aircraft was scheduled to land at Truckee then continue to Palm Springs. It is unknown at this time if this was a private, leased or chartered aircraft.*

*The wind was westerly at three knots, considered calm in aviation terms. The sky was clear although smoke and haze reduced the visibility to five statute miles. Lightning was present in the distance. Visibility was reported as better than five miles which is legal and acceptable for visual flight and visual maneuvering.*

*It has been confirmed there were six souls on board, and two dogs. Kevin Kvarnlov, Ryan Thomas, Christine Thomas, and John Dunn were passengers. Bret Ebaugh, an experienced pilot with a family from the Minneapolis area, and Alberto Montero De Collado De La Rosa have been identified as the pilots.*

*Oakland Center, the FAA jurisdictional authority for air traffic control for the Truckee region handled the aircraft while en route and on the transition to the airport. Oakland Center handed the aircraft off to the Truckee Tahoe Airport Control Tower (Tower). The aircraft flew the Runway 20 (southbound) approach and broke off to maneuver visually which is a common method during the final phase of flight and landing.*

*The Tower offered the pilot two options: cross overhead the airport for Runway 29 (west-facing), or join left pattern for Runway 11 (east-facing). The flight crew joined left pattern for Runway 11 and reported over the radio that they had the runway in sight.*

*The final crash site and flight track data appear to show the aircraft overshot the runway centerline to the south. The aircraft descended rapidly and struck a treed area inside the Martis Estates neighborhood between the street and the fairway of the Ponderosa Golf Course. Video of the aircraft shows it was low, struck trees, and was engulfed in fire immediately. Witness accounts support the concept that the aircraft may have been inverted when it struck trees. Fire personnel driving in the area responded within one or two minutes.*

**We want to share information we have regarding the current accident investigation.**

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is the lead agency tasked with finding the cause of the accident. The FAA has done a thorough review of our Control Tower, its protocol, and the handling of the subject aircraft. The finding of the official Services Rendered Evaluation shows the Control Tower followed all proper procedures and conduct. The Tower has received a GREEN level review, the highest safety rating for a post-accident evaluation.

On August 4, 2021, the FAA flew their test aircraft, a Learjet XR60, to replicate the procedures and the flight path of the subject aircraft to determine if any procedural anomalies exist. The outcome of this test flight has not been published by the FAA. No correspondence from the FAA regarding hazards for this route has been received by the Airport.

The NTSB has issued a preliminary report [https://truckeetahoeairport.com/documents/614-july\\_26\\_incident\\_report-pdf](https://truckeetahoeairport.com/documents/614-july_26_incident_report-pdf).

This preliminary report specifies the general details of the flight, but not the cause of the accident. Usually, within 12-18 months, a final report will be issued to outline the entire accident, known or unknown causes,

and the final outcome(s). While the length of this timeline is standard within the aviation industry, we understand that it may be difficult to accept. The Airport is also eager to understand the cause of the accident and will share information with the community once it becomes available.

**We want to share information we have regarding the incident site cleanup.**

The registered owner of the aircraft is Tarco Aircraft Funding, LLC, of Fort Lauderdale Florida. The insurance company representing the aircraft owner is McLarens Insurance of Lynnwood Washington (Mr. Darin Shaefer). The responsible party for site remediation and cleanup is McLarens Insurance. The Town of Truckee and Nevada County Health Department are the responsible jurisdictional authorities for the safety of the site. The Airport is assisting these agencies and working to promote the rapid cleanup of the site and the surrounding area of the homes directly affected by this tragedy.

Following is a summary from Nevada County Environmental Health (EH) with information to date regarding the site cleanup:

*Darin Shaefer, Clarin Aviation, is currently working with Tom Landwehr, Project Manager with Apex Envirotech, Inc. Apex Envirotech, Inc. will be overseeing/supervising Ponder Environmental (subcontractor) with the soil removal. Soil has been removed, trees have been removed and site clean up continues. Some property owners are working with Clarin Aviation to make repairs to property.*

*Process at this time:*

- 1. Apex Envirotech will continue to work on site with Ponder Environmental supervising the soil removal and site remediation.*
- 2. Apex Envirotech will also be conducting soil testing to ensure all contaminants are removed*
- 3. Apex will provide NV Co. EH with the test results for final approval and closure of clean up/workplan.*

**We want to share our progress on crisis response services for those affected by this incident.**

On August 2, 2021, the first of three crisis response and grief counseling sessions were held by the Nevada County Mental Health Department. Approximately 20 people attended. On August 3, 2021, two meetings were held: one for children, one for adults. Approximately eight people showed up to these.

Additional resources include ongoing support from Nevada County Mental Health, from a resource perspective. Tahoe Forest Hospital District (TFHD) maintains a comprehensive list of local mental health providers which can be found at [www.tfhd.com/services/mental-health-providers](http://www.tfhd.com/services/mental-health-providers). Placer and Nevada County Behavioral Health clinicians work closely with TFHD for referrals that meet criteria for County Behavioral Health services. More information can be found by visiting [www.tfhd.com/behavioral-health-services](http://www.tfhd.com/behavioral-health-services).

Airport Staff continue to take calls related to this event and work directly with sign boards and notices to the community related to this incident.

The Airport is open from 7AM-9PM daily, 365 days per year. The General Manager and Senior Staff are present to meet in person to answer any questions related to the Airport. Please contact the Airport at (530) 587-4119 x 107 and we will arrange a time to meet. Staff is also available to answer questions about other related agencies who govern the conduct and control of aircraft in flight, such as the FAA.

**Aviation is a complex system, and the Airport plays one role within this, as well as a major role within our Truckee Tahoe Community.**

In situations like this, it can be helpful to remember how the aviation system works and who is responsible for which part of an aircraft's journey. The Airport manages aircraft movements on the ground including the

taxiways and where a plane is permitted to park and refuel. We can only attempt to influence runway selection which is primarily dictated by wind direction on any given day. Pilots are permitted by FAA regulations to select any available runway.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) controls aircraft in flight, with official flight procedures and instructions from air traffic control. But like a driver taking a road trip, the pilot is the one in control during most of the journey. The pilot must follow the rules of the road which are known as the Federal Aviation Regulations or FAR's. Pilots are responsible for knowing the amount of fuel required to complete a trip, weather conditions that affect the flight, and their options if something goes wrong. We tell you this not to cast blame or pass the buck about this incident, but as a reminder that, while we work hard to influence operations, the airport doesn't have the ability to control in-flight aviation activity or the number of operations.

### **What the airport has done to improve safety**

As an airport operator, the Truckee Tahoe Airport District (TTAD) is limited in its opportunities to control where aircraft fly, how many aircraft can use the airport, and when they fly. However, where able, we work constantly to influence where aircraft fly to reduce risk, increase safeguards and reduce noise and annoyance. In recent years we have accomplished the following major safety initiatives:

- TTAD implemented the satellite-based "ADS-B" communications program for pilots in our region. This system provides real-time data about where planes are in the air, and it enables pilots to see each other in the mountainous terrain, as well as to stay in contact with air traffic control centers.
- TTAD installed and continues to staff an air traffic control tower. Having an experienced controller to provide separation services helps keep pilots and those on the ground safe.
- In the past few years, TTAD has established a Safety Department, hired a Safety Manager, as well as a full-time Pilot Outreach Coordinator. Both individuals are experienced commercial pilots who spend their time actively working on airfield safety issues as well as pilot education for our based and transient corporate pilots.
- Staff has completed a teleconference with our FAA Flight Standards District Office (FSDO). Staff requested physical FAA presence during peak periods to enhance and promote compliance with regulations and standards related to safety of flight. Staff has also requested that the FAA participate in community forums to discuss and describe their safety approach and methodology related to KTRK. The FAA, both FSDO and Airport District Office, are aware of our request for additional federal resources in support of flight safety. Staff is also reviewing circle to land criteria and working with the FAA to understand our control of authorization over these activities.

TTAD is also undergoing the rigorous process of developing new flight procedures. Although the FAA controls all aircraft activity in the air, the airport has developed the case for these new flight paths to encourage the FAA to adopt them. The proposed procedures would have pilots spend less time over-populated neighborhoods and more time over open space.

We constantly communicate with pilots about safety and the complexities of flying in our mountain region. Our Pilot Outreach Coordinator talks with pilots who land here. This individual also goes to other airports to talk to pilots who *might* land here. We share information on social media and our website. We publish newsletters, post signs, and host regional safety seminars. Again, while we have limited control over how they fly, we do everything we can to share the information pilots need to fly in and out of KTRK as safely as possible.

Contacts for further information:

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