

3 confirmed dead in aircraft collision near Frederick Municipal Airport

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Staff reports

Three are confirmed dead in an aircraft collision near Frederick Municipal Airport, according to Chip Jewell, director of the Frederick County Division of Volunteer Fire and Rescue Services.

A Frederick Police Department officer has confirmed that a helicopter and airplane collided at around 3:45 p.m. today in the southwest corner of Frederick Municipal Airport.

The three people in the helicopter died. They were identified as Christopher D. Parsons, 29, of Westminster; William Jenkins, 47, of Morrison, Colorado; and Breandan J. MacFawn, 35, of Cumberland. State police said they had not yet confirmed which person was piloting the helicopter as of Thursday evening.

The two occupants of the airplane were transported by ambulance to Meritus Medical Center, both adult males, according to a Meritus spokeswoman. The hospital discharged the men to their families at about 6:45 p.m.

Pouget said the helicopter broke into pieces upon striking the ground. The airplane deployed a parachute, helping it descend into the trees, she said.

The helicopter crashed into a storage facility near the scene, according to Maryland State Police spokesman Greg Shipley. The plane went down off Monocacy Boulevard in a tree line. The storage facility where the helicopter crashed is at Highland and Monroe streets, just south of where the plane went down.

Maryland State Police has not identified those who died or the injured.

The plane involved in the crash is owned by Graeves Auto and Appliance in Olney. A woman answering the phone at their office declined to comment.

The FAA reports the Cirrus SR22 was inbound to the airport and the helicopter was involved in a training exercise when the accident occurred.

The plane was coming from Cleveland Regional Airport in Tennessee, according to Flightaware.

"It was like Armageddon," a neighbor said, describing chaos after the collision. "This does not happen in Frederick."

"I thought it was a balloon or a parachute and then, within minutes, all of this was happening," resident John Hartman said, describing the scene.

Jesse Ault Jr. of Brunswick had picked his wife up from her job at Image Direct. The two were in the drive-through at Wendy's when he said he saw a plane spinning out of control and a parachute releasing. They drove back to his wife's office building parking lot and saw the plane had landed in a tree.

Ault then saw a man who he thought was the pilot due to his proximity to the plane. The man, Ault said, was receiving medical attention but was walking on his own. His face was bloodied but his injuries did not appear severe, Ault said.

"I think he was more shaken up about the situation," Ault said.

Ault did not see the helicopter involved in the crash.

"Everyone was coming in really quick," he said.

The FAA and the NTSB will investigate the cause of the crash. The airport and the tower have been shut down.

There are 182 aircraft based at the Frederick Airport, including 172 airplanes and 10 helicopters.