

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Engine Failure Led To Plane Crash, FAA Preliminary Investigation Reveals

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ST. CROIX -- The Federal Aviation Administration (F.A.A.) on Friday issued its preliminary accident and data notice for the plane crash that occurred at the Henry E. Rohlsen Airport on Thursday night, which left five individuals, including the pilot, dead.

The F.A.A. said the aircraft, which was on its way to St. Thomas, returned to the St. Croix airport because of engine problems. It was destroyed by fire on airport property, the notice, seen [here](#), said.

The aircraft was identified as a [Beech-branded plane](#), not Baron-branded, as had been previously reported.

The names of the deceased have not been released to the public, and it was not clear whether the Department of Justice, which is responsible for notifying families, had completed the task. David Mapp, the Virgin Islands Port Authority's executive director, told The Consortium late Friday that V.I.P.A.'s concern was with the number of passengers on the aircraft, suggesting that the release of names was not necessary the port's job. "We only are concerned about # on board for the determination of fees," Mr. Mapp told The Consortium in a text message. "This is standard in the industry. There were 5 victims, and beyond that I do not have any names at this point."

Samuel Carrion, whose official title at Government House is "liaison to the faith-based community", but also performs communications duties, said the Port Authority was responsible for making the names available once it ascertains that the Dept. of Justice has notified all next of kin.

The crash occurred about 8:54 p.m., according to [a statement](#) the Port Authority issued on its Facebook page.

Police Commissioner Delroy Richards told The Consortium hours after the crash that the aircraft, a private chartered plane, took off from the St. Croix airport and soon after started experiencing engine problems, with flames coming from one of its two engines. The pilot circled back and attempted to land at the airport, but the plane crashed in a field area near the runway, leaving all occupants dead, Mr. Richards said, corroborating the F.A.A.'s notice.

David Goodrich, commander of St. Croix Rescue's extrication team, who was on the scene of the incident, told The Consortium that by the time they arrived to the area, there was nothing they could do.

The plane included one member of the Stylee Band. At least two other persons on the plane were affiliated with the group, but they were not members of the band.

Moments following the accident, the V.I.P.D. cordoned off the east and west entrances of the airport, only allowing in first responders. The V.I. Fire Service and other first responder agencies were already on the scene when a medical examiner vehicle was spotted heading to the area.

The tragedy has cast a cloud of sadness over the territory, as the Stylee Band, currently one of the territory's premier groups, is known to help carry the festival season, especially their performances during the Festival Village, j'ouvert morning and the parades.

And the news of the crash and the plane's high-profile occupant sent a shock through social media, with thousands mourning the unfortunate occurrence.

Feature Image: A picture of the crash site that has been circulating in Virgin Islands social media circles, including texts, WhatsApp groups and on Facebook. (Credit: Unknown)

