



LAKELAND FIRE DEPARTMENT

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Plane Crash Leads to Structure Fire; Explosive Chemicals Inside

Lakeland, FL- At approximately 9:20 AM a call came for a structure fire at Key Safety Systems, 5300 Allen K Breed Hwy, Lakeland, FL. Reports also came in of a plane in distress from local witnesses. Upon arriving Lakeland Fire Department (LFD) firefighters encountered a fully engulfed building. Crews were quickly made aware of potentially explosive chemicals being stored in the warehouse space, a former plastics warehouse. Being a storage facility with no people inside, crews attacked the fire from the exterior with no firefighters entering due to the potential safety risks to firefighters.

The fire contained by crews within approximately one and half hours. Inside were chemicals

- Powdered Aluminum
- Nitroguanidine

Nitroguanidine must be kept wet or it will become potentially explosive. These chemicals were stored by Key Safety Systems for the manufacturing of airbag systems in vehicles. Due to the risk to of the chemicals exploding firefighters did not enter until the fire was contained. Polk County Fire Rescue's Hazardous Materials Team was called to assist and upon fire being extinguished team entered the structure to survey the site and perform reconnaissance of the chemicals.

It has been confirmed that the fire started due to a plane crash at the scene. There were to passengers on board. The plane belonged to local flight school Tail Wheels Inc. based out of Lakeland Linder Regional Airport. It was a Piper Apache A23 plane, tail # 465JA.

Since extinguishing the fire, water has continued to be applied to the site via unmanned, remote controlled equipment to stabilize the chemicals inside and keep temperatures down. Crews are now undergoing the methodical tasks of keeping the temperatures down and inspecting each individual unit of uncompromised Nitroguanidine and Powdered Aluminum. Crews are checking temperatures and ensuring they are no longer a risk before allowing Lakeland Police Crime Scene Investigators in to investigate. ACT Environmental has been called on scene to remove the chemicals and will do so once the scene is investigated and cleared.

Upon cursory inspections of the warehouse there are no airplane parts or victims to recover. It is suspected that this is due to the high temperature at which the chemical fueled fire burned. Once able to be allowed in LPD Crime Scene investigators will be able to investigate and confirm any findings. At time of this media release LFD crews are still on scene performing overhaul of the structure and contents inside.

This occurred in a primarily industrial are so there is no risks to any nearby residents or commuters. The property is surrounded by additional warehouse space and pasture land.

This will likely continue this through the rest of the day. If anything new develops it will be shared via Lakeland Fire Department's Twitter, Facebook, and Website pages as well as via email to media outlets.

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Gary Ballard, Fire Chief

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