

707 CREW WAS WARNED BEFORE CRASH

KANSAS CITY, MO., APRIL 14 -- The crew of a cargo plane that crashed and exploded Monday night, killing all four people aboard, did not respond to two radio warnings that the craft was too low as it tried to land, a federal agency spokesman said today.

Three crew members and a passenger were killed when the Boeing 707 crashed into a pasture and creek bank about two miles from Kansas City International Airport's main runway.

Possible causes include trouble with instruments, engines, fuel or weather, which was foggy and misty, said Bob Raynesford, a Federal Aviation Administration spokesman. He said radio contact was lost soon after the plane was warned about its altitude.

Byron Aust said he was in bed when he saw through his window a plane he knew was too low. At first he and his wife thought it was a passenger plane. "We ran from window to window, then we both just watched it explode," said Aust, who was a helicopter crew chief in Vietnam.

"It went up in a billowing mushroom of fire. You could see it going higher in stacks. It was the worst thing I've ever seen in my life. My knees got weak."

The plane was flying from Oklahoma City to Fort Wayne, Ind., with stops at Wichita, Kan., and Kansas City, Mo., when it approached the runway in fog and mist. Raynesford said there was a 100-foot ceiling and visibility was about 6,000 feet.

"That's not necessarily a problem. The aircraft was making an instrument approach, and those kinds of weather conditions are usually okay for that. But I'm sure it will be looked into carefully," he said.

The plane was being flown for Burlington Air Express by Buffalo Airways Inc., a Waco, Tex., company.

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