Beat: Technology

Plane carrying skydivers crashes in Poland, killing 11

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USPA News - Eleven people were killed on Saturday when a small plane carrying a group of skydivers crashed and burst into flames in southern Poland, police said. It is believed the plane may have been carrying passengers in excess of its maximum capacity.

The accident happened at approximately 4 p.m. local time on Saturday when the Piper Navajo aircraft went down in the small village of Topolów, about 13 kilometers (8 miles) north of Cz"stochowa in southern Silesia province. The aircraft - which took off from Cz"stochowa-Rudniki Airport - was carrying 11 passengers and one pilot from a local parachute club. Police in Katowice, the regional capital, said the twin-engine aircraft burst into flames after it crashed in a wooded area close to a number of homes. Firefighters responding to the crash site extinguished the blaze and recovered one survivor who was rushed to an area hospital in unknown condition. It was not immediately known what was the cause of Saturday`s accident, but Piper Navajo aircraft are generally designed to carry a maximum of nine people. "Police officers, in addition to protecting the scene, are working under the direction of prosecutors to inspect the site and collect evidence," a Katowice police spokesperson said. The families of the victims were being supported by police psychologists, the spokesperson added. Saturday`s accident marked the country`s worst aviation disaster since January 2008, when a military transport plane crashed near a town in northwest Poland while preparing to land, killing all 20 people on board, including high-ranking air force officers. An investigation blamed pilot error as the cause of the crash.

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