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Pilot killed, 2 badly hurt as planes collide in Temple

From Staff and Wire Reports

TEMPLE — A pilot tried in vain to warn two small planes that they were dangerously close to colliding moments before the single-engine Cessnas crashed in mid-air, killing one man and injuring two others, authorities said.

The accident occurred as both planes were making a final approach to the runway at Draughon-Miller Municipal Airport about 4:20 p.m., said patrolman Terry Kelley of the Temple Police Department, who was investigating the crash.

"The airport has no tower and

pilots are responsible for letting each other know their positions," said Kelley.

Authorities identified the dead pilot as Steven L. Morris, 34, of Killeen. His passenger, Gregory A. Arzola, 30, of Fort Hood, and the other pilot, Shannon A. Schunicht, 23, of Killeen, were critically injured.

Officials at Scott and White Hospital at Temple said Arzola and Schunicht were in critical condition early today in the intensive care unit of the hospital.

Kelley said that according to wit-

nesses the two single-engine Cessnas were making a final approach to the landing strip and one plane was flying slightly above the other.

The pilot of a third plane noticed the two aircraft were flying too close together and tried to radio them but received no response, Kelley said.

As the planes neared the ground, "their wings touched and they both went down," Kelley said.

"We don't know why they got so close. They might have been on each other's blind side," said Steve Klempa, Temple deputy police chief.

Morris and passenger Arzola were on board the Cessna 150, and the second aircraft, a Cessna 152, contained only the pilot, Kelley said.

Morris was pronounced dead at 5:30 p.m. at Scott and White Memorial Hospital in Temple, said hospital spokesman Donald Nelson.

The crash occurred 150 to 200 feet north of the airport runway, the officer said. He said officials had not determined the altitude of the planes at the time of the collision.