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Four Foreign Nationals Killed in Plane Crash at Southend Airport

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Four people tragically lost their lives when a small aircraft crashed shortly after take-off at London Southend Airport on Sunday. The victims, all foreign nationals, were on board a private plane headed for the Netherlands.

Essex Police confirmed the aircraft involved was a U.S.-manufactured Beechcraft B200 Super King Air, a twin-turboprop model commonly used for business and medical transport. Detective Chief Superintendent Morgan Cronin said the plane “got into difficulty and crashed within the airport boundary” just moments after lifting off.

Emergency crews were called immediately and responded swiftly, but all four occupants of the aircraft were sadly pronounced dead at the scene. Formal identification is ongoing, and officials are in the process of informing the victims' families.

Southend Airport, located roughly 35 miles east of central London, has suspended all flights and operations until further notice. The airport's Chief Executive Officer, Jude Winstanley, issued a statement expressing the deepest sympathies to the families of those who died. She confirmed the closure of the airport was necessary to assist authorities in their investigation and to ensure the safety of staff and passengers.

Investigation Underway

The Air Accidents Investigation Branch (AAIB), the United Kingdom's independent authority on civil aviation incidents, has launched a full inquiry into the crash. Eight of its investigators have been deployed to the site. An AAIB spokesperson stated that it was "too early" to determine the cause and that the scene would be examined thoroughly in the coming days.

The Beechcraft B200 Super King Air has a generally strong safety record, though aviation experts say even well-built aircraft are susceptible to unexpected faults. Investigators will examine the plane's maintenance history, pilot actions, weather at the time, and other contributing factors.

Southend Airport, once a growing hub for short-haul flights to Europe, has seen reduced commercial traffic since the pandemic but remains used for private and specialist flights. EasyJet, which previously operated from the airport, has since limited its presence, although Southend continues to serve smaller carriers and private operators.

This incident has prompted fresh discussions around the need for consistent oversight and safety protocols at all U.K. airports, regardless of their size or traffic levels. Aviation analysts have pointed out that regional airports often operate with fewer resources, making rigorous safety checks and infrastructure support all the more crucial.

As the investigation unfolds, the public has been asked to come forward with any footage or information that could aid the inquiry. Essex Police are working closely with aviation authorities to piece together what went wrong during the doomed flight.

There has been no public comment from the aircraft's operator or owners yet. Updates are expected in the coming days as authorities continue their work and families begin to process the loss of their loved ones.

The airport remains closed, and passengers are advised to check with their airlines before travelling.