NASA is searching for new solution as tested Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT) didn’t activated as it should.

Photo: NASA

NASA Crashes Cessna to Test Emergency Beacon, Which Failed to Activate

iVan Budimir July 31, 2015

NASA crashed a small airplane only to find that the emergency beacon, the same as one found in flight MH-370, failed to engage.

(Newswire.net -- July 31, 2015) -- An old Cessna 172 served as NASA’s test airplane while scientists and engineers tried to resolve an issue with the emergency beacon, NASA reported.

Reportedly, one of the main reasons Malaysian flight MH-370 hasn’t been located is precisely due the failure of this emergency device that didn’t activate. In order to test the system, NASA desided to smash an Cessna 172 from a tall crane.

The beacon is supposed to activate within 50 seconds of a crash, but frequently fails.

“Too often they fail to work as expected, in part, because of inadequate performance specifications in several areas including vibration, fire survivability, automatic activation, crash safety and system installation,” said Chad Stimson, NASA Langley Emergency Locator Transmitter Survivability and Reliability (ELTSAR) project manager.

NASA is interested in developing a new, more resilient emergency beacon system that can survive any crash, burn or water situation, sending a ping to identify the crash site.

While the first crash test plunged a vintage 1958 4-seater plane into concrete, the second released a plane of the same design from a greater height above a muddy patch, which NASA said mirrored realistic crash conditions more closely. However, the newly designed beacon failed to activate.

“It’s actually worse,” said Stimson, comparing the second test to the earlier one. Stimson said that airplanes that hit concrete tend to skid over the surface causing actually less force than mud and dirt. Airplanes that hit mud and dirt often dig into it “so all that force is absorbed by the airframe and the occupants,” Stimson said.

“No one would have walked away from this. They might be alive, but they’d need help right away. In that sense, it’s the perfect search and rescue case.”

Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT) is the emergency beacon system that are in use in most of the aircrafts today. It consists of two parts, one that detects the abnormality (crash or pressure change) and one that transmits the signal. Reportedly, flight MH-370 was equipped with an ELT that failed to activate.

Recent findings of an airplane part on an island in the Indian ocean, could belong belong to mysterious MG-370 flight that went missing last year. This could potentially lead to the location of the wreckage of ill-faith Malaysian Boeing 777, and provide some answers, not only to families of victims aboard, but to the global public as well.