

Pilot statement sent to FAA inspector on 8/4/18

The following is the report of the balloon flight of Cameron A-250, N2025J co-piloted by Eric Empey and Greg Taylor on August 3, 2018. Statement emailed to FAA Rick Hosker on 8/5/18 at 0655.

The flight launched for our normal launch site near Hartsel, Colorado at 7:17 am with light winds and mostly cloudy skies. The flight was completely normal with no adverse weather conditions, we landed safely at 8:15 am in winds of 7-8 mph. It was a typical landing for that particular wind speed with a drag from first contact of the ground of 40-50 feet. The accident occurred upon the initial deflation of the balloon envelope after landing, the basket had come to a complete stop, upright, but due to the 7-8 mph surface wind the decision was made to deflate the envelope with all passengers still in the basket. Eric instructed all of the passengers to stay low in the basket and hold on as we were going to deflate the envelope. Before we started the actual deflation of the envelope the basket rocked forward passed its tipping point and came down hard on its side. Two of the passengers in the left rear compartment fell forward out of the basket, Joyce Haskell fell first and the second passenger Linda Reida fell with all her weight directly on top of Joyce's upper back and forcing her head into the ground. It was obvious that Joyce was in need of medical attention so I immediately called 911 at 8:19 am. In corresponding with the 911 operator giving instructions it was quickly determined that she had become unresponsive with very shallow breathing and no pulse. Two other passengers Justin and Heather Schlenker are Colorado police officers and began CPR with Eric Empey under the instruction of the 911 operator until the paramedics arrived. At that point the paramedics took over care and stabilized Joyce. Flight for life was called in to transport Joyce to Penrose hospital in Colorado Springs. Linda Reida had a wrist injury and facial cuts and contusions. One of our crew persons transported Linda to the same hospital that Joyce is at. No other injuries were reported.

The following is a list of contact information for all of the passengers on the flight:

Joyce Haskell [REDACTED]
Linda Reida [REDACTED]
Sandra Simoson [REDACTED]
Heather Schlenker [REDACTED]
Jason Schlenker [REDACTED]
Ana Lynne Riggan [REDACTED]
Russell Riggan [REDACTED]
Kelly Wek [REDACTED]
Elizabeth Wek [REDACTED]

Please let me know what else you need from me.

Thank you,

Greg Taylor
Colorado Hot Air Balloon Rides
www.coloradoballoonrides.com

Pilot Eric Empey [REDACTED]
PIC Greg Taylor [REDACTED]

Pilot statement sent to NTSB investigator on 8/12/18

The following is Greg Taylor's report of the hot air balloon flight of Cameron A-250, N2025J co-piloted by Eric Empey and Greg Taylor on August 3, 2018:

The flight launched from our normal launch site near Hartsel, Colorado at 7:17 am with light surface winds and mostly cloudy skies. There were no adverse weather conditions present or forecast during our flight period. The one hour sightseeing flight was completely normal with no adverse weather conditions, we landed safely at 8:15 am in surface winds of 7-8 mph. It was a typical landing for that particular wind speed with an overall drag from initial contact of the ground of 40-50 feet.

The accident occurred upon the initial deflation of the balloon envelope after landing, the basket had come to a complete stop, upright, but due to the characteristics present at that moment the decision was made to deflate the envelope with all passengers still in the basket. The envelope was partially deflated as it is normal operating procedure to open the top of the envelope during landing to release heat in order to stop the aircraft. The amount that the top is opened varies depending on the characteristics present on each landing. The surface wind had begun to dish the envelope and it was quickly determined that the envelope had deflated beyond the point of reseating the top and adding heat to keep the envelope inflated. I instructed Eric to fully deflate the envelope. I want to reiterate that the basket was upright and had come to a complete stop. Eric instructed all of the passengers to stay low in the basket and hold on as we were going to deflate the envelope. At that point, I exited the basket in the same fashion that I have done on all of the instructional flights with Eric to take the crown line and run it out to fully deflate the envelope. Before I was able to acquire the crown line the basket rocked forward passed its tipping point and came down hard on its side.

Two of the passengers in the left rear compartment fell forward out of the basket, Joyce Haskell fell first and the second passenger Linda Reida fell with all her weight directly on top of Joyce's upper back and forcing her head into the ground. It was obvious that Joyce was in need of medical attention so I immediately called 911 at 8:19 am. In corresponding with the 911 operator giving instructions it was quickly determined that Joyce had become unresponsive with very shallow breathing and no pulse. Two other passengers Justin and Heather Schlenker are Colorado police officers and began CPR with Eric Empey under the instruction of the 911 operator until the paramedics arrived. At that point the paramedics took over care and stabilized Joyce. Flight for life was called in to transport Joyce to Penrose hospital in Colorado Springs. Linda Reida had a wrist injury and facial cuts and contusions. One of our crew persons transported Linda to the same hospital that Joyce is at. No other injuries were reported.

Lindberg Joshua

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 9, 2018 10:36 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Lindberg Joshua
Subject: RE: Requested information

Thank you.

Bret Proud
Aviation Safety Inspector
Denver Flight Standards District Office
26805 E. 68th Ave. Suite 200, Denver, CO 80249
Phone: [REDACTED]

From: Colorado Hot Air Balloon Rides [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 09, 2018 9:05 AM
To: Proud, Bret (FAA) [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Requested information

The flight manual is Cameron Balloons US

Thank you,

Greg Taylor

Greg Taylor
Colorado Hot Air Balloon Rides

On Aug 9, 2018, at 8:37 AM, [REDACTED] > wrote:

Mr. Taylor, could you please tell me what flight manual you use on that balloon?

Bret Proud
Aviation Safety Inspector
Denver Flight Standards District Office
26805 E. 68th Ave. Suite 200, Denver, CO 80249
Phone: [REDACTED]

From: Colorado Hot Air Balloon Rides [REDACTED] >
Sent: Wednesday, August 08, 2018 9:59 AM
To: Proud, Bret (FAA) <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Fw: Requested information

Here is the information, sorry for taking down the incorrect email address.

Greg Taylor
Colorado Hot Air Balloon Rides
[REDACTED]

www.coloradoballoonrides.com

From: Colorado Hot Air Balloon Rides [REDACTED] >
Sent: Monday, August 6, 2018 3:39 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Requested information

Bret,

Please find attached a copy of the last annual inspection and the latest flight review.

Greg Taylor
Colorado Hot Air Balloon Rides
[REDACTED]
www.coloradoballoonrides.com