



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Rio Rancho, New Mexico	Accident Number:	GAA20CA012
Date & Time:	October 7, 2019, 09:00 Local	Registration:	N9126K
Aircraft:	Aerostar International RX 7	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Defining Event:	Hard landing	Injuries:	2 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Air race/show		

Analysis

The balloon pilot reported that, during an air race, she identified a landing area with dirt roads. She had a gradual descent to land, but as the balloon neared the surface, the winds were "in the 20+ mile per hour range." The balloon landed hard and bounced. She instructed the passenger to get lower in the basket, regained control, and attempted another landing. During the second landing, the pilot "pulled the red line to let the hot air out of the envelope but was dragged across the ground," and she was ejected from the basket; the passenger remained in the balloon. A crewmember on the ground instructed the passenger to pull the red line again. The balloon landed hard, the passenger was ejected, and the basket was destroyed by postaccident fire. The pilot reported that there were no preaccident mechanical failures or malfunctions with the balloon that would have precluded normal operation.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

The pilot's failure to maintain an adequate descent rate during landing, which resulted in a hard landing and a postaccident fire.

Findings

Aircraft	Descent rate - Not attained/maintained
Personnel issues	Aircraft control - Pilot
Personnel issues	Aircraft control - Passenger

Factual Information

History of Flight

Landing	Hard landing (Defining event)
Landing	Miscellaneous/other

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	66,Female
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Unknown
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Balloon	Restraint Used:	Unknown
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	BasicMed With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	September 15, 2019
Flight Time:	(Estimated) 537.4 hours (Total, all aircraft), 343.8 hours (Total, this make and model), 377.8 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 3.7 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 3.7 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2.2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Aerostar International	Registration:	N9126K
Model/Series:	RX 7 No Series	Aircraft Category:	Balloon
Year of Manufacture:	1998	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Balloon	Serial Number:	RX7-3326
Landing Gear Type:	None	Seats:	
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	September 3, 2019 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1480 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	
Airframe Total Time:	300 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KAEG,5837 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	6 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	14:47 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	193°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	3 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	None / None
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	N/A / N/A
Altimeter Setting:	30.25 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	13°C / 0°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Corrales, NM	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	08:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed
Passenger Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Fire:	On-ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	35.241664,-106.767776(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Benhoff, Kathryn
Additional Participating Persons:	Ken Hand; FAA; Albuquerque, NM
Original Publish Date:	May 21, 2020
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	This accident report documents the factual circumstances of this accident as described to the NTSB.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=100410

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