



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

<b>Location:</b>	WATERLOO, Iowa	<b>Accident Number:</b>	CHI98LA184
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	May 30, 1998, 06:55 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N25491
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Balloon Works 15	FIREFLY 7-	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b> Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	2 None
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

## Analysis

The accident balloon was part of a balloon rally. The pilot reported that he arrived at the target drop area near the Waterloo Municipal Airport. He further reported that 'After throwing my baggie I started to burn to get enough lift to clear powerlines. It seems to me we were going parallel with the powerlines along Jordan Street and would have cleared the powerlines on West Airline Highway when a gust of wind took us into the powerlines on Jordan Street.' After contacting the wires the balloon slid horizontally down the wires until the basket came to rest alongside a power pole. The pilot secured the basket to the pole using a rope and waited for approximately 2 hours until he and the passenger were lowered out of the basket by the fire department. Calm winds were reported in the area at the time of the accident.

## 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 clearance with the power lines during climb. A factor was the power lines.

### Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT  
Phase of Operation: CLIMB

Findings

1. (F) OBJECT - WIRE, TRANSMISSION
2. (C) CLEARANCE - NOT OBTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

## Factual Information

On May 30, 1998, at 0655 central daylight time, a Balloon Works Firefly 7-15, N25491, operated by a commercial rated balloon pilot, collided with powerlines during an approach to a field in Waterloo, Iowa. The pilot and passenger were not injured. The balloon received substantial damage. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and no flight plan was filed. The 14 CFR Part 91 flight was taking part in a balloon race when the accident occurred. The flight originated in Waterloo, Iowa, at approximately 0637.

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### Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Commercial	<b>Age:</b>	57, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Unknown
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	Balloon	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	No
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Unknown Unknown	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	UNK	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	
<b>Flight Time:</b>	582 hours (Total, all aircraft), 582 hours (Total, this make and model), 582 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Balloon Works	<b>Registration:</b>	N25491
<b>Model/Series:</b>	FIREFLY 7-15 FIREFLY 7-	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Balloon
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	F7-775
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>		<b>Seats:</b>	0
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	May 14, 1998 Annual	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	1750 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>	132 Hrs	<b>Engines:</b>	Unknown
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>		<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	
<b>ELT:</b>		<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	HENRY A. SCHICK	<b>Rated Power:</b>	
<b>Operator:</b>		<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None
<b>Operator Does Business As:</b>		<b>Operator Designator Code:</b>	

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual (VMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>		<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	
<b>Observation Time:</b>		<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Clear	<b>Visibility</b>	10 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	None	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	/	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Wind Direction:</b>	0°	<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	29 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	17°C / 17°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>		<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	None
<b>Destination:</b>		<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>	06:37 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class G

## Airport Information

<b>Airport:</b>		<b>Runway Surface Type:</b>	
<b>Airport Elevation:</b>		<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	
<b>Runway Used:</b>	0	<b>IFR Approach:</b>	
<b>Runway Length/Width:</b>		<b>VFR Approach/Landing:</b>	None

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 None	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>	1 None	<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	None
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	2 None	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	42.490806,-92.350173(est)

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Sullivan, Pamela
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	LARRY L ARENHOLZ; DES MOINES , IA
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	January 18, 2001
<b>Last Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Investigation Class:</b>	<a href="#">Class</a>
<b>Note:</b>	
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	<a href="https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=10901">https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=10901</a>

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