



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	BATON ROUGE, Louisiana	Accident Number:	FTW96LA001
Date & Time:	October 1, 1995, 18:45 Local	Registration:	N63286
Aircraft:	AEROSTAR S60A	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	3 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

AFTER AN UNEVENTFUL FLIGHT, THE BALLOON PILOT COMMENCED AN APPROACH TO LAND IN A FIELD LOCATED BETWEEN POWER LINES AND AN APARTMENT COMPLEX. ACCORDING TO THE PILOT, SHE 'PASSED OVER THE POWER LINES', AND ABOUT 20 FEET PRIOR TO TOUCH DOWN, A 'SUDDEN, STRONG GUST OF WIND' PUSHED THE BALLOON 'DOWNWARD AND BACKWARD.' SUBSEQUENTLY, THE ENVELOPE CONTACTED THE POWER LINES THAT SHE HAD JUST PASSED OVER, AND THE BASKET CONTACTED THE GROUND. AFTER CONTACTING THE GROUND, THE BALLOON BEGAN TO SLIDE SIDEWAYS AND CONTACTED ANOTHER POWER LINE.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: THE PILOT'S FAILURE TO COMPENSATE FOR WIND CONDITIONS AND MAINTAIN ADEQUATE CLEARANCE FROM THE POWER LINES DURING THE APPROACH. A FACTOR WAS THE SUDDEN WIND GUST.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER
Phase of Operation: APPROACH

Findings

1. (C) COMPENSATION FOR WIND CONDITIONS - NOT PERFORMED - PILOT IN COMMAND

2. (C) CLEARANCE - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - GUSTS

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

4. OBJECT - WIRE, TRANSMISSION

Factual Information

On October 1, 1995, at 1845 central daylight time, an Aerostar S60A balloon, N63286, was substantially damaged during an approach to land in a field near Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The pilot and two passengers were not injured. The balloon, owned by the pilot, was being operated under Title 14 CFR Part 91. The personal flight was participating in a local ballooning event. A flight plan was not filed and visual meteorological conditions prevailed.

In an interview, the pilot stated that she commenced an approach to land in a field located between power lines and an apartment complex. During the approach, she "passed over the power lines", and about 20 feet prior to touch down, a "sudden, strong gust of wind" pushed the balloon "downward and backward." Subsequently, the envelope contacted the power lines that she had "passed over", and the basket contacted the ground. She further stated that, after contacting the ground, the balloon began to slide sideways and contacted another power line.

Examination of the balloon revealed arcing on the basket attaching cables and a torn envelope.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	54,Female
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Unknown
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Balloon	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	None Unknown	Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	120 hours (Total, all aircraft), 116 hours (Total, this make and model), 104 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 12 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 4 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	AEROSTAR	Registration:	N63286
Model/Series:	S60A S60A	Aircraft Category:	Balloon
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	
Landing Gear Type:		Seats:	
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	April 2, 1995 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	
Time Since Last Inspection:	26 Hrs	Engines:	Unknown
Airframe Total Time:	112 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	
Registered Owner:	GALE M. SMITH	Rated Power:	
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Does Business As:		Operator Designator Code:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:		Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:		Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	6 knots / 20 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	95°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	31°C / 24°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:		Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	17:35 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	Full stop

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	2 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	3 None	Latitude, Longitude:	30.399866,-91.139747(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Lemishko, Alexander
Additional Participating Persons:	TONY MICHELLI; BATON ROUGE , LA
Original Publish Date:	December 19, 1995
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=19677

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The NTSB does not assign fault or blame for an accident or incident; rather, as specified by NTSB regulation, “accident/incident investigations are fact-finding proceedings with no formal issues and no adverse parties ... and are not conducted for the purpose of determining the rights or liabilities of any person” (Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* section 831.4). Assignment of fault or legal liability is not relevant to the NTSB’s statutory mission to improve transportation safety by investigating accidents and incidents and issuing safety recommendations. In addition, statutory language prohibits the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report (Title 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b)). A factual report that may be admissible under 49 *United States Code* section 1154(b) is available [here](#).