



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

<b>Location:</b>	CAREFREE, Arizona	<b>Accident Number:</b>	LAX88LA002
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	October 3, 1987, 09:00 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N1600P
<b>Aircraft:</b>	Avian Balloon MAGNUM IX	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	1 Serious, 6 Minor
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation		

## Analysis

DURING THE FIRST TAKEOFF ATTEMPT, A SMALL PORTION OF THE BALLOON ENVELOPE CAUGHT FIRE AND WAS QUICKLY EXTINGUISHED. THE SECOND TAKEOFF ATTEMPT WAS SUCCESSFUL. ONE PASSENGER ON THE BALLOON SAID THAT THE FLIGHT WAS VERY ERRATIC RANGING IN ALTITUDE FROM 10 FEET AGL TO 1000 FEET AGL. THE BALLOON ENVELOPE PARTIALLY COLLAPSED IN TURBULENT WEATHER AND WENT INTO AN UNCONTROLLED DESCENT. THE BALLOON BASKET COLLIDED WITH THE TERRAIN AND FOUR OF THE SEVEN OCCUPANTS FELL OUT. THE BALLOON SHOT INTO THE AIR, DESCENDED, AND COLLIDED WITH THE TERRAIN AGAIN. THE PILOT COLLAPSED THE ENVELOPE AS THE BALLOON SKIDDED ACROSS THE GROUND. WINDS WERE REPORTED TO BE FROM 090 DEGREES AT 09 KNOTS GUSTING TO 15 KNOTS.

## Probable Cause and Findings

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

### Findings

Occurrence #1: AIRFRAME/COMPONENT/SYSTEM FAILURE/MALFUNCTION  
Phase of Operation: CLIMB

#### Findings

1. (C) BALLOON EQUIPMENT, ENVELOPE - DISTORTED

2. (C) FLIGHT INTO KNOWN ADVERSE WEATHER - ATTEMPTED - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (C) WEATHER CONDITION - TURBULENCE

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Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER  
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

4. BALLOON EQUIPMENT,BASKET - DUMPED
5. (C) ALTITUDE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
6. WEATHER CONDITION - GUSTS

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Occurrence #3: ABRUPT MANEUVER  
Phase of Operation: CLIMB

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Occurrence #4: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER  
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

7. EMERGENCY PROCEDURE - PERFORMED - PILOT IN COMMAND
8. BALLOON EQUIPMENT,ENVELOPE - COLLAPSED

## Factual Information

### Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Commercial	<b>Age:</b>	67, 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>	None None	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	Yes	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	
<b>Flight Time:</b>	566 hours (Total, all aircraft), 81 hours (Total, this make and model), 522 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 11 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

### Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	Avian Balloon	<b>Registration:</b>	N1600P
<b>Model/Series:</b>	MAGNUM IX MAGNUM IX	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Balloon
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	135
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	Hull	<b>Seats:</b>	
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	Unknown	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	1000 lbs
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>	38 Hrs	<b>Engines:</b>	0 Unknown
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>	38 Hrs	<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	unknown
<b>ELT:</b>	Not installed	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	UNK
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	CRILEY, SHIRLEY	<b>Rated Power:</b>	
<b>Operator:</b>	RAINBOW BALLOON FLIGHTS	<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>	PHX ,1132 ft msl	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	30 Nautical Miles
<b>Observation Time:</b>	09:00 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	180°
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Clear	<b>Visibility</b>	20 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	None	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	9 knots / 15 knots	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Wind Direction:</b>	90°	<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	29 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	32°C / -2°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
<b>Departure Point:</b>	CAREFREE , AZ	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	None
<b>Destination:</b>		<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>	08:30 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class G

## Airport Information

<b>Airport:</b>		<b>Runway Surface Type:</b>	Dirt
<b>Airport Elevation:</b>	0 ft msl	<b>Runway Surface Condition:</b>	Dry
<b>Runway Used:</b>	0	<b>IFR Approach:</b>	None
<b>Runway Length/Width:</b>	0 ft / 0 ft	<b>VFR Approach/Landing:</b>	Full stop;Straight-in

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 Minor	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>	1 Serious, 5 Minor	<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	On-ground
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	None
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	1 Serious, 6 Minor	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	33.820293,-111.900207(est)

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Leighton, Russell
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	RUTH A GRASEL; SCOTTSDALE , AZ
<b>Original Publish Date:</b>	November 8, 1988
<b>Last Revision Date:</b>	
<b>Investigation Class:</b>	<a href="#">Class</a>
<b>Note:</b>	
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	<a href="https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=25876">https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=25876</a>

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is an independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating every civil aviation accident in the United States and significant events in other modes of transportation—railroad, transit, highway, marine, pipeline, and commercial space. We determine the probable causes of the accidents and events we investigate, and issue safety recommendations aimed at preventing future occurrences. In addition, we conduct transportation safety research studies and offer information and other assistance to family members and survivors for each accident or event we investigate. We also serve as the appellate authority for enforcement actions involving aviation and mariner certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and US Coast Guard, and we adjudicate appeals of civil penalty actions taken by the FAA.

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](#).