



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	LA JOLLA, California	Accident Number:	LAX93LA289
Date & Time:	July 12, 1993, 19:16 Local	Registration:	N2809D
Aircraft:	Raven S-60A	Aircraft Damage:	None
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Serious, 1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Instructional		

Analysis

The student pilot said he was initiating a takeoff for a local area solo flight. When the balloon was ready for liftoff, the student reportedly used the phrase 'crew weight off' in a customary voice call during the takeoff maneuver. Three of the four ground crewman released their hold on the basket, while the fourth individual did not let go. The basket rose rapidly and the fourth ground crewman let go of the basket at an estimated height of 30 to 40 feet above ground level. The fourth crewman fell to the ground and sustained multiple bone fractures.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: the failure of the injured ground crewman to release his hold on the basket in a timely manner when instructed by the pilot.

Findings

Occurrence #1: MISCELLANEOUS/OTHER
Phase of Operation: TAKEOFF - INITIAL CLIMB

Findings

1. (C) PROCEDURES/DIRECTIVES - NOT FOLLOWED - GROUND PERSONNEL

Factual Information

On July 12, 1993, at 1916 Pacific daylight time, a ground crewman sustained serious injuries during the takeoff of a Raven Industries S60A balloon, N2809D, near La Jolla, California. The balloon was owned and operated by the pilot. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time and no flight plan was filed for the operation. The balloon was not damaged. The certificated student pilot, the sole occupant, was not injured. The injured ground crewman sustained multiple fractures of both legs. The flight was originating at the time of the accident as a local area student solo instructional flight.

The student pilot said he was initiating a takeoff for a local area solo flight. When the balloon was ready for liftoff, the student reportedly used the phrase "crew weight off" in a customary voice call during the takeoff maneuver. Three of the four ground crewman released their hold on the basket, while the fourth individual did not let go. The basket rose rapidly and the fourth ground crewman let go of the basket at an estimated height of 30 to 40 feet above ground level. The fourth crewman fell to the ground and sustained multiple bone fractures.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Student	Age:	25, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Unknown
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	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:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	32 hours (Total, all aircraft), 10 hours (Total, this make and model), 2 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 10 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:	Raven	Registration:	N2809D
Model/Series:	S-60A S-60A	Aircraft Category:	Balloon
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	S60A-403
Landing Gear Type:		Seats:	0
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	July 1, 1993 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1470 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	1 Hrs	Engines:	0 Unknown
Airframe Total Time:	3360 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	
Registered Owner:	WILLIAM R. MILLER	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	20 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	2 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	270°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	22°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	(NONE)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	(NONE)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	19:15 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

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

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	None
Passenger Injuries:		Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious, 1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	32.799411,-117.129028(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Rich, Jeff
Additional Participating Persons:	JOHN HYNDMAN; SAN DIEGO , CA
Original Publish Date:	June 30, 1994
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=28426

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](#).