



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	TUCSON, Arizona	Accident Number:	LAX97LA124
Date & Time:	March 16, 1997, 07:45 Local	Registration:	N71150
Aircraft:	Aerostar RX7	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Serious, 1 Minor, 1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

According to the other balloon pilots, who witnessed the accident, the pilot was landing in a crowded area and made what appeared to be a normal landing. The balloon bounced, and then collided with an unoccupied and standing balloon. No adverse weather conditions were noted by the witnesses.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: failure of the pilot to maintain safe altitude/clearance from another balloon, while landing in a crowded area.

Findings

Occurrence #1: ON GROUND/WATER COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: LANDING - FLARE/TOUCHDOWN

Findings

1. (F) AIRPORT FACILITIES, RUNWAY/LANDING AREA CONDITION - CONGESTED/CONFINED AREA
2. OBJECT - AIRCRAFT PARKED/STANDING
3. (C) ALTITUDE/CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

On March 16, 1997, at 0745 hours mountain standard time, an Aerostar RX7 balloon, N71150, participating in a hot air balloon rally, collided with another balloon during landing in Tucson, Arizona. The balloon was substantially damaged. The pilot/owner was seriously injured, one passenger had minor injuries, and the other passenger was not injured. Visual meteorological conditions existed for the local hot air balloon rally that originated at 0730.

According to the pilot, participants in the hot air balloon rally received full weather briefings for Ryan Field Airport, Davis-Montham AFB, and the Ina Road Heliport, all in Tucson, before the rally began. In a telephone interview, the pilot reported the winds were forecasted at 7 knots until 1200. He stated that he had flown both Friday and Saturday and the weather conditions were good, and that Sunday seemed like the weather would be more of the same. He realized that the wind was in fact gusting to 20 knots, and made the decision to land. The balloon came in too fast and low and hit hard. On landing the pilot's leg went through the gondola. During the touchdown sequence, the gondola twisted, lifted off at an angle, caught the edge of another balloon already on the ground, ripping holes in the other balloon's envelope. No one else on the ground was injured. The pilot and passengers of the other balloon were not in the balloon during the accident sequence.

According to the other pilots who witnessed the accident, the pilot was landing in a crowded area and made what appeared to be a normal landing, bounced, and then collided with the other balloon. No adverse weather conditions were noted by the witness.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	48, Male
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:	Unknown Unknown	Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	100 hours (Total, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Aerostar	Registration:	N71150
Model/Series:	RX7 RX7	Aircraft Category:	Balloon
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	3309
Landing Gear Type:		Seats:	0
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	May 16, 1996 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	857 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	47 Hrs	Engines:	Unknown
Airframe Total Time:	96 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	
Registered Owner:	RONALD E. AROS	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:	TUS ,5042 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:	07:56 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	3 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	130°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	16°C / 1°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	, AZ	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	07:30 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Minor, 1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious, 1 Minor, 1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	32.090328,-111.080497(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Cornejo, Tealeye
Additional Participating Persons:	CHRIS CLARK; SCOTTSDALE , AZ
Original Publish Date:	May 21, 1998
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=29743

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