



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	KANSAS CITY, Missouri	Accident Number:	MKC87FA067
Date & Time:	April 4, 1987, 18:03 Local	Registration:	N3695B
Aircraft:	BALLOON WORKS FIREFLY 6	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Serious, 1 Minor, 1 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

THE PILOT STATED THAT LIFT-OFF AND CLIMBOUT WERE NORMAL BUT, SHORTLY THEREAFTER, THE FUEL PILOT LIGHT BEGAN TO FAIL CONTINUOUSLY UNTIL THE BURNER FLAMED OUT. THE PASSENGERS WERE BRIEFED AND THE CHASE VEHICLE WAS CONTACTED BY CB RADIO BEFORE THE PLT CLIMBED UP ON THE SIDE OF THE BASKET IN AN UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO RE-IGNITE THE FUEL BURNER'S PILOT LIGHT. PASSENGERS STATED THAT THE PLT ORDERED THEM TO LAY ON THE FLOOR OF THE BASKET PRIOR TO IMPACT AS SHE TRIED TO ARREST THE BALLOON'S DESCENT WITH THE EMERGENCY BURNER. THE BALLOON LANDED HARD IN AN OPEN FIELD, BOUNCED, THEN SLID ON THE TURF FOR APPROX 150 FEET BEFORE SNAGGING A BARBED WIRE FENCE. A POST-CRASH FIRE ERUPTED WHEN THE BALLOON,S ENVELOPE DRAPED ACROSS POWERLINES. THE PIC STATED THAT THE EMERGENCY PROCEDURES WERE HANDLED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE AIRCRAFT'S FLIGHT MANUAL.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

Findings

Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER

Phase of Operation: CLIMB

Findings

1. (C) BALLOON EQUIPMENT, BURNER SYSTEM - ERRATIC

Occurrence #2: FORCED LANDING

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

Findings

2. (F) CONDITION(S)/STEP(S) INSUFFICIENTLY DEFINED - MANUFACTURER

3. (F) EMERGENCY PROCEDURE - DELAYED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - EMERGENCY

Findings

4. TERRAIN CONDITION - OPEN FIELD

Occurrence #4: ON GROUND/WATER COLLISION WITH OBJECT

Phase of Operation: OTHER

Findings

5. (F) OBJECT - FENCE

6. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - UNFAVORABLE WIND

Occurrence #5: FIRE

Phase of Operation: OTHER

Findings

7. (F) OBJECT - WIRE, TRANSMISSION

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	33,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 None	Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	62 hours (Total, all aircraft), 62 hours (Total, this make and model), 41 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

Aircraft Make:	BALLOON WORKS	Registration:	N3695B
Model/Series:	FIREFLY 6 FIREFLY 6	Aircraft Category:	Balloon
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Limited (Special)	Serial Number:	F6-003
Landing Gear Type:		Seats:	
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	May 21, 1986 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	900 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	14 Hrs	Engines:	0 Unknown
Airframe Total Time:	14 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	UNKNOWN
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	UNKNOWN
Registered Owner:	BILL A. SMILEY	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:	6 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	20°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	10°C / -18°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	KANSAS CITY , MO	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	17:50 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class E

Airport Information

Airport:		Runway Surface Type:	Grass/turf
Airport Elevation:	0 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	0	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	0 ft / 0 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Forced landing

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 Serious, 1 None	Aircraft Fire:	On-ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious, 1 Minor, 1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	38.869449,-94.589607(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Vargas, Ramon
Additional Participating Persons:	RANDOLPH ROBINSON; KANSAS CITY , MO BEN MORROW; KANSAS CITY , MO WILLIAM A SMILEY; OLATHE , KS
Original Publish Date:	January 11, 1989
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=34283

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](#).