



Aviation Investigation Final Report

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| Location: | ANTHONY, New Mexico | Accident Number: | DEN00LA071 |
| Date & Time: | April 9, 2000, 08:15 Local | Registration: | N2571F |
| Aircraft: | Balloon Works 15 | FIREFLY F- | Aircraft Damage: Substantial |
| Defining Event: | | Injuries: | 3 None |
| Flight Conducted Under: | Part 91: General aviation - Personal | | |

Analysis

Following landing, and prior to the balloon being secured to the ground, the pilot shut down the burner and the passengers egressed from the basket contrary to the pilot's instructions, which were to stay in the basket until she told them to exit. As a result of the decrease in weight, the balloon lifted off and drifted into power lines. Because the burner was shut down, the pilot had no control in the vertical plane.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: Failure by the pilot to keep the burner operating until the balloon was secured. A factor was the passengers disregarding the instructions they had been given by the pilot.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: LANDING - ABORTED

Findings

1. OBJECT - WIRE, TRANSMISSION
2. (F) INSTRUCTIONS, WRITTEN/VERBAL - NOT FOLLOWED - PASSENGER
3. (C) EQUIPMENT, OTHER - INITIATED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

On April 9, 2000, at 0815 mountain daylight time, a Balloon Works Firefly F-15, N2571F, sustained substantial damage at Anthony, New Mexico, when it drifted into power lines following landing. The private pilot and her two passengers were not injured. The flight was operating under Title 14 CFR Part 91 and no flight plan was filed.

According to the pilot, the passengers disregarded her instructions and exited the basket before the balloon was secured following landing. The burners had been shut down and the valves placed in the off position. The pilot said that when the passengers disembarked, the decrease in weight caused the balloon to rise and it drifted into nearby power lines. The lines arced and caused fire damage to the envelope. The pilot remained in the basket until it came to rest.

Pilot Information

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| Certificate: | Private | Age: | 45,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: | Unknown Unknown | Last FAA Medical Exam: | |
| Occupational Pilot: | UNK | Last Flight Review or Equivalent: | |
| Flight Time: | 49 hours (Total, all aircraft), 49 hours (Total, this make and model), 29 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 12 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft) | | |

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

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|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------|
| Aircraft Make: | Balloon Works | Registration: | N2571F |
| Model/Series: | FIREFLY F-15 FIREFLY F- | Aircraft Category: | Balloon |
| Year of Manufacture: | | Amateur Built: | |
| Airworthiness Certificate: | | Serial Number: | 7824-3 |
| Landing Gear Type: | | Seats: | 0 |
| Date/Type of Last Inspection: | May 21, 1999 Annual | Certified Max Gross Wt.: | 1750 lbs |
| Time Since Last Inspection: | 10 Hrs | Engines: | Unknown |
| Airframe Total Time: | 49 Hrs | Engine Manufacturer: | |
| ELT: | | Engine Model/Series: | |
| Registered Owner: | MICHAEL L PRITCHARD | Rated Power: | |
| Operator: | MARTA C. PRITCHARD | Operating Certificate(s) Held: | None |
| Operator Does Business As: | | Operator Designator Code: | |

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

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| 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: | / | Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Wind Direction: | 0° | Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual: | / |
| Altimeter Setting: | 30 inches Hg | Temperature/Dew Point: | |
| Precipitation and Obscuration: | No Obscuration; No Precipitation | | |
| Departure Point: | | Type of Flight Plan Filed: | None |
| Destination: | | Type of Clearance: | None |
| Departure Time: | 07:00 Local | Type of Airspace: | Class G |

Airport Information

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|-----------------------------|---|----------------------------------|-----------|
| Airport: | | Runway Surface Type: | |
| Airport Elevation: | | Runway Surface Condition: | |
| Runway Used: | 0 | IFR Approach: | |
| Runway Length/Width: | | VFR Approach/Landing: | Full stop |

Wreckage and Impact Information

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|----------------------------|--------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Crew Injuries: | 1 None | Aircraft Damage: | Substantial |
| Passenger Injuries: | 2 None | Aircraft Fire: | On-ground |
| Ground Injuries: | N/A | Aircraft Explosion: | None |
| Total Injuries: | 3 None | Latitude, Longitude: | 31.94948,-107.019111(est) |

Administrative Information

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| Investigator In Charge (IIC): | Wiemeyer, Norman |
| Additional Participating Persons: | PATRICK M MACQUARRIE; ALBUQUERQUE , NM |
| Original Publish Date: | November 29, 2000 |
| Last Revision Date: | |
| Investigation Class: | Class |
| Note: | The NTSB traveled to the scene of this accident. |
| Investigation Docket: | https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=48919 |

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](#).