



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	WINDERMERE, Florida	Accident Number:	MIA00LA179
Date & Time:	May 26, 2000, 12:00 Local	Registration:	N6341V
Aircraft:	Aerostar S57-A	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	5 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Other work use		

Analysis

The balloon was tethered with a three-point, 3/4-inch rope top harness system, anchored on the upwind sides to two trees and on the downwind side to a truck. The last four passengers boarded, and the pilot was waiting for the wind speed to decrease when the balloon was suddenly launched on its own and was thrown to the top of the harness, about 80 feet, in less than 2 seconds. The pilot initiated emergency procedures, but was unsuccessful in bringing the balloon back to the ground, because the force of the wind was pushing the balloon upward. The two upwind lines broke leaving the balloon dangling about 100 feet in the air over power lines. After 30 seconds the downwind line broke initiating free flight. The pilot was able to stabilize the balloon enough to initiate an emergency landing. The balloon impacted with trees about 1/8 of a mile downwind of the original tether site.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: an in-flight collision with a tree. A factor in this accident was high wind conditions.

Findings

Occurrence #1: ON GROUND/WATER ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER
Phase of Operation: STANDING

Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - HIGH WIND

2. WEATHER CONDITION - UPDRAFT

Occurrence #2: ABRUPT MANEUVER

Phase of Operation: STANDING

Occurrence #3: FORCED LANDING

Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY DESCENT/LANDING

Occurrence #4: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT

Phase of Operation: EMERGENCY DESCENT/LANDING

Findings

3. OBJECT - TREE(S)

Factual Information

On May 26, 2000, about 1200 eastern daylight time, an Aerostar S57-A balloon, N6341V, registered to a private individual impacted with trees during an emergency landing, while on a local sightseeing flight near Windermere, Florida. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time and no flight plan was filed. The balloon received substantial damage. The commercial-rated pilot and four passengers reported no injuries.

According to the pilot, the balloon was tethered with a three-point, 3/4-inch rope top harness system, anchored on the upwind sides to "two solid" old growth trees and on the downwind side to a truck. After several passengers were taken up without incident the last four passengers boarded. The pilot was waiting for a subsidence in wind when the balloon was suddenly launched on its own by "false lift" and was thrown to the top of the harness, about 80 feet, in less than 2 seconds. The pilot initiated vent top emergency "rip-out" procedures, but was unsuccessful in bringing the balloon back to the ground in this manner, because the force of the wind was pushing the balloon upward. The two upwind lines "snapped" leaving the balloon dangling about 100 feet in the air over power lines. The pilot stated, the power lines made "further 'rip-out' options too dangerous to consider." After 30 seconds the downwind line "snapped initiating free flight." The pilot was able to stabilize the balloon enough to initiate an emergency landing. The balloon impacted with trees about 1/8 mile downwind of the original tether site.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	33, 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:	None Unknown	Last FAA Medical Exam:	
Occupational Pilot:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	78 hours (Total, all aircraft), 78 hours (Total, this make and model), 43 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 37 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 23 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Aerostar	Registration:	N6341V
Model/Series:	S57-A S57-A	Aircraft Category:	Balloon
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	S57A-3118
Landing Gear Type:		Seats:	
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	
Time Since Last Inspection:	70 Hrs	Engines:	Unknown
Airframe Total Time:	500 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	
Registered Owner:	DAVID M. FULLER	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	6 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	5 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	90°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:		Temperature/Dew Point:	27°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:		Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	12:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	

Airport Information

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

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	4 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	5 None	Latitude, Longitude:	28.490001,-81.529312(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Yurman, Alan
Additional Participating Persons:	LARISSA LARAWAY; ORLANDO , FL
Original Publish Date:	May 30, 2003
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	The NTSB traveled to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=49314

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