



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	STEAMBOAT SPGS, Colorado	Accident Number:	DEN00LA146
Date & Time:	August 6, 2000, 08:30 Local	Registration:	N5164R
Aircraft:	Aerostar S-77A	Aircraft Damage:	None
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Serious, 5 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Aerial observation		

Analysis

According to the pilot, he instructed passengers on landing procedures and techniques. He said that during the landing sequence, the balloon came down short of the intended spot and impacted a small bush. The 'basket tipped to an angle of 45 degrees, then righted itself.' During this unexpected degree of tipping, one of four passengers broke her ankle. The pilot said the weather was not a factor.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's failure to maintain clearance from a bush during the balloon landing.

Findings

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

Findings

1. (C) CLEARANCE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
2. OBJECT - OTHER

Factual Information

On August 6, 2000, approximately 0830 mountain daylight time, an Aerostar International, Inc., S-77A balloon, N5164R, was not damaged when collided with a bush during landing near Steamboat Springs, Colorado. The commercial pilot and four passengers were not injured; however, one passenger was seriously injured. The balloon was being operated by Pegasus Balloon Tours under Title 14 CFR Part 91. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the local flight that originated approximately 60 minutes before the accident. No flight plan had been filed.

According to the pilot, he instructed passengers on landing procedures and techniques. He said that during the landing sequence, the balloon came down short of the intended spot and impacted a "small bush." The "basket tipped to an angle of 45 degrees, then righted itself." During this unexpected degree of tipping, the passenger broke her ankle.

The pilot said the weather was not a factor.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial; Flight instructor	Age:	56, 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:	2970 hours (Total, all aircraft), 51 hours (Total, this make and model), 2970 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 48 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 40 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Aerostar	Registration:	N5164R
Model/Series:	S-77A S-77A	Aircraft Category:	Balloon
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	S77A-3028
Landing Gear Type:		Seats:	0
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	July 7, 2000 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2800 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	33 Hrs	Engines:	Unknown
Airframe Total Time:	131 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	
Registered Owner:	IAN COX	Rated Power:	
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None
Operator Does Business As:	PEGASUS BALLOON TOURS	Operator Designator Code:	

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	HDN ,18 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	
Observation Time:	08:15 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	270°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	8 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	100°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	16°C / 5°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	(NONE)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	07:30 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Airport Information

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

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	None
Passenger Injuries:	1 Serious, 4 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious, 5 None	Latitude, Longitude:	40.450332,-106.82093(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Struhsaker, James
Additional Participating Persons:	JOHN STEVENSON; DENVER , CO
Original Publish Date:	May 18, 2001
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	The NTSB traveled to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=49928

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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](#).