



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Reno, Nevada	Accident Number:	LAX03LA095
Date & Time:	February 22, 2003, 08:00 Local	Registration:	N6413N
Aircraft:	Aerostar RX-7	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	3 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The balloon collided with power lines while descending toward a landing spot. The pilot was crossing a north-south ridgeline while approaching a landing spot in a meadow. The balloon flew over the descending slope and cleared a set of power lines that ran parallel to the ridgeline. A sudden wind shift occurred, blowing the balloon back towards the power lines. The pilot turned on the burner in an attempt to clear the power lines again, however, sufficient lift was not achieved. Realizing that a collision was inevitable, the burner and tanks were shut off and instruments disconnected. After the initial impact the balloon continued rising, and the pilot pulled the 'rip-cord' attached to the deflation port. A rapid decent followed, and the balloon came to rest directly under the power lines.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: A sudden wind shift that forced the balloon to drift towards an obstruction, and the pilot's inability to perform an evasive maneuver in sufficient time to prevent a collision.

Findings

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

Findings

1. WEATHER CONDITION - SUDDEN WINDSHIFT
2. (C) EVASIVE MANEUVER - NOT SUCCESSFUL - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. OBJECT - WIRE, TRANSMISSION

Factual Information

On February 22, 2003, at 0800 Pacific standard time, an Aerostar RX-7 balloon, N6413N, collided with power lines while maneuvering to land in a meadow northwest of Reno, Nevada. The balloon was owned and operated by the pilot under the provisions of 14 CFR Part 91. The private pilot and two passengers were not injured; the balloon sustained substantial damage. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the local area flight that departed from a nearby field at 0715. No flight plan had been filed.

The pilot stated that he was crossing a north-south ridgeline while approaching a landing spot in a meadow. The balloon flew over the descending slope and cleared a set of power lines that ran parallel to the ridgeline. A sudden wind shift occurred, blowing the balloon back towards the power lines. The pilot turned on the burner in an attempt to clear the power lines again, however, sufficient lift was not achieved. Realizing that a collision was inevitable, the burner and tanks were shut off and instruments disconnected. After the initial impact the balloon continued rising, and the pilot pulled the 'rip-cord' attached to the deflation port. A rapid decent followed, and the balloon came to rest directly under the power lines.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	47, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	
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:	UNK	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	October 24, 2002
Flight Time:	83 hours (Total, all aircraft), 7 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Aerostar	Registration:	N6413N
Model/Series:	RX-7	Aircraft Category:	Balloon
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	RX7-3039
Landing Gear Type:	None	Seats:	
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	September 10, 2002 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1480 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	20 Hrs	Engines:	1
Airframe Total Time:	355 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	Aero Engines
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	HP25-3029
Registered Owner:	Jeffrey D. Haliczar	Rated Power:	
Operator:		Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	KRNO,4412 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	11 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	07:56 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	140°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 20000 ft AGL	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	3 knots / 0 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.1 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	-1°C / -34°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Reno, NV	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	07:15 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	2 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	3 None	Latitude, Longitude:	39.666667,-119.866668

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Rich, Jefferey
Additional Participating Persons:	Gary Hamlin; Federal Aviation Administration; Reno, NV
Original Publish Date:	September 1, 2004
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=56530

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