



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Louisville, Colorado	Accident Number:	DEN03LA126
Date & Time:	July 11, 2003, 07:37 Local	Registration:	N9011J
Aircraft:	National Ballooning LTD 858	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Serious, 2 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

According to the pilot, he departed with variable winds at 6 knots. At approximately 0710, the wind increased to 22 to 24 knots. Approximately 30 minutes later, the pilot located a landing site and started an approach. During the approach, the balloon increased in speed and descended faster than planned. The pilot stated he "quickly went to two burners" with no result. The balloon failed to clear a fence and the pilot pulled the "red line." The basket impacted the ground, ejecting the passengers and pilot. The pilot was dragged behind the basket until his foot disentangled from the red line. Subsequently, the balloon impacted a "building, a fence, a farm gate and transmission wires." The envelope was ripped open at several locations. According to the aviation routine weather report (METAR) taken at 0747 from Jefferson County Airport, winds were reported as 340 degrees at 20 knots.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's inability to control the balloon. Contributing factors include the high winds, the attempted remedial action by the pilot, the building, fence, and transmission wires.

Findings

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER
Phase of Operation: LANDING

Findings

1. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - HIGH WIND

Occurrence #2: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: LANDING

Findings

2. (C) AIRCRAFT CONTROL - NOT POSSIBLE - PILOT IN COMMAND
 3. (F) REMEDIAL ACTION - ATTEMPTED - PILOT IN COMMAND
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Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

4. (F) OBJECT - BUILDING(NONRESIDENTIAL)
5. (F) OBJECT - FENCE
6. (F) OBJECT - WIRE, TRANSMISSION

Factual Information

On July 11, 2003, at 0737 mountain daylight time, a National Ballooning LTD 858 balloon, N9011J, was substantially damaged when it struck power lines during a landing near Louisville, Colorado. The commercial pilot was seriously injured, and his two passengers received minor injuries. The flight was being operated by Skyspan Adventures, LLC, under the provisions of Title 14 CFR Part 91. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the local flight that had departed an off airport site near Boulder, Colorado, at approximately 0640. No flight plan had been filed.

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Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	73, 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:	
Flight Time:	770 hours (Total, this make and model)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	National Ballooning LTD	Registration:	N9011J
Model/Series:	858	Aircraft Category:	Balloon
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	142
Landing Gear Type:	Skid	Seats:	5
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	May 24, 2003 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1450 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	14 Hrs	Engines:	
Airframe Total Time:	43 Hrs	Engine Manufacturer:	
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	BJC, 5288 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	10 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	07:47 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	330°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Few / 8000 ft AGL	Visibility:	60 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	20 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	340°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.22 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	21°C / 7°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Boulder, CO (NONE)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	06:40 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	2 Minor	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious, 2 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	39.96389,-105.12722

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Struhsaker, James
Additional Participating Persons:	John Lusk; FAA FSDO; Denver, CO
Original Publish Date:	February 5, 2004
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=57450

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