



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Anthony, Kansas	Accident Number:	CEN13CA278
Date & Time:	May 11, 2013, 06:00 Local	Registration:	N3171L
Aircraft:	Balloon Works FIREFLY 8B-15	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Collision during takeoff/land	Injuries:	3 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

The balloon had just taken off from the airport as part of a balloon rally. The pilot said that the balloon was about 150 to 200 feet above the ground and that he was checking his flight instruments when the balloon encountered a "false lift condition" and settled on top of the rotating beacon tower on the airport. The balloon envelope was torn open, deflating the envelope, and the basket settled on the ground. A postaccident examination of the balloon showed substantial damage to the top one-third of the envelope's fabric and load tapes. No preaccident anomalies were found that would have precluded normal operation of the balloon.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's failure to monitor the balloon's altitude, which resulted in the balloon impacting an airport rotating beacon tower.

Findings

Personnel issues	Lack of action - Pilot
Aircraft	Altitude - Not attained/maintained

Factual Information

History of Flight

Takeoff	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)
Takeoff	Collision during takeoff/land (Defining event)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	71
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Front
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:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	415 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1 hours (Total, this make and model)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Balloon Works	Registration:	N3171L
Model/Series:	FIREFLY 8B-15	Aircraft Category:	Balloon
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	F8B-493
Landing Gear Type:	None	Seats:	1
Date/Type of Last Inspection:		Certified Max Gross Wt.:	
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	0
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	
ELT:		Engine Model/Series:	
Registered Owner:	BALLOONPORT OF OKLAHOMA INC	Rated Power:	
Operator:	BALLOONPORT OF OKLAHOMA INC	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	AVA	Distance from Accident Site:	43 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	06:00 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	225°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Scattered / 4700 ft AGL	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:		Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	6 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	290°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.13 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	9°C / 8°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	Anthony, KS (ANY)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Anthony, KS (ANY)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	06:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	

Airport Information

Airport:	Anthony Municipal Airport ANY	Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:	1340 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:		IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	None

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:	37.158611,-98.079719

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Bowling, David

Additional Participating Persons:

Original Publish Date: August 29, 2013

Last Revision Date:

Investigation Class: [Class](#)

Note: This accident report documents the factual circumstances of this accident as described to the NTSB.

Investigation Docket: <https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=86900>

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](#).