



# Aviation Investigation Final Report

<b>Location:</b>	Rio Rancho, New Mexico	<b>Accident Number:</b>	CEN14LA007
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	October 9, 2013, 08:45 Local	<b>Registration:</b>	N9528A
<b>Aircraft:</b>	CAMERON BALLOONS US V 77	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>	Controlled flight into terr/obj (CFIT)	<b>Injuries:</b>	2 Serious
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

## Analysis

The pilot and passenger departed on a balloon flight and had been airborne for a little over an hour before making three attempts to land. The wind was too strong on the first attempt; on the next attempt, they found themselves over a residential subdivision that prevented them from landing. The pilot then saw an open area on the other side of a street with power lines running along it. His intent was to get over the power lines and then drop the balloon down to the ground. They were over the road and a couple of feet over the power lines when the balloon dropped and struck the power lines. The pilot engaged the burner and the basket slid off the first two wires, but when the basket touched the third wire there was an electrical short and then an explosion. The pilot reported the explosion was the last thing he remembered until he found himself on the ground with the envelope going down.

## 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 adequate clearance from power lines on approach to land, resulting in a collision with the wires, a spark, and a subsequent explosion and on-board fire.

## Findings

<b>Personnel issues</b>	Incorrect action selection - Pilot
<b>Environmental issues</b>	Wire - Response/compensation



## Factual Information

### History of Flight

<b>Approach</b>	Controlled flight into terr/obj (CFIT) (Defining event)
<b>Post-impact</b>	Explosion (post-impact)

On October 9, 2013, about 0845 mountain daylight time, a Cameron V-77 hot air balloon, N9528A, impacted a power line while on approach to land in a field near Rio Ranch, New Mexico. The commercial pilot and passenger on board received serious injuries and the balloon was substantially damaged. The balloon was registered to and being operated by a private individual as a 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 personal flight. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the flight, which operated without a flight plan. The flight originated at Fiesta Field, Albuquerque, New Mexico, at 0730.

The pilot reported they took off from Fiesta Field and had been in the air for a little over an hour when the accident occurred. The pilot made three attempts to land. The wind was "too hard" on the first attempt. The next attempt, they found themselves over a residential subdivision and as they got close to the ground there were cars and other obstacles that prevented them from landing. The pilot then saw an open area on the other side of a street with power lines running along it. His intent was to get over the power lines and then drop the balloon down on the ground.

The pilot reported they were over the road and a couple of feet above where the tops of the power lines were, when the balloon dropped and struck the power lines. He engaged the burner to get off and over them. The basket slid off the first two wires, but touched the third wire. There was an electrical short and then an explosion. The passenger was in the part of the basket where the explosion occurred. The pilot reported the explosion was the last thing he remembered until he found himself on the ground with the envelope going down. He tried to assist the passenger out of the basket and put out the fire that was burning the basket.

The pilot received burns to his arms and face. The passenger received severe burns along his arm, such that the arm had to later be amputated.

At 0852, the weather conditions at the Albuquerque International Airport, 15 miles south-southeast of Rio Rancho, were wind calm, visibility 10 statute miles, few clouds at 20,000 feet, temperature 55 degrees Fahrenheit (F), dew point, 34 degrees F, and altimeter 30.02 inches of Mercury.

## Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Commercial	<b>Age:</b>	59
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Single-engine land	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Center
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	Balloon	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	None
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	No
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	None None	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	No	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	April 30, 2013
<b>Flight Time:</b>	(Estimated) 290 hours (Total, all aircraft), 105 hours (Total, this make and model), 220 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 8 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 6 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 24 hours, all aircraft)		

## Passenger Information

<b>Certificate:</b>		<b>Age:</b>	
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>		<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	Unknown
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>		<b>Restraint Used:</b>	None
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>		<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>		<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	No
<b>Medical Certification:</b>		<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	UNK	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	
<b>Flight Time:</b>			

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Make:</b>	CAMERON BALLOONS US	<b>Registration:</b>	N9528A
<b>Model/Series:</b>	V 77 NO SERIES	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Balloon
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>	1990	<b>Amateur Built:</b>	
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	5649
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	N/A; Skid	<b>Seats:</b>	
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>		<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>		<b>Engines:</b>	
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>		<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	
<b>ELT:</b>		<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	KILGORE MARK A	<b>Rated Power:</b>	
<b>Operator:</b>	KILGORE MARK A	<b>Operating Certificate(s) Held:</b>	None

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

<b>Conditions at Accident Site:</b>	Visual (VMC)	<b>Condition of Light:</b>	Day
<b>Observation Facility, Elevation:</b>	ABQ	<b>Distance from Accident Site:</b>	15 Nautical Miles
<b>Observation Time:</b>	08:52 Local	<b>Direction from Accident Site:</b>	135°
<b>Lowest Cloud Condition:</b>	Few / 20000 ft AGL	<b>Visibility</b>	10 miles
<b>Lowest Ceiling:</b>	None	<b>Visibility (RVR):</b>	
<b>Wind Speed/Gusts:</b>	/	<b>Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:</b>	/ None
<b>Wind Direction:</b>		<b>Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:</b>	/ N/A
<b>Altimeter Setting:</b>	30.02 inches Hg	<b>Temperature/Dew Point:</b>	13°C / 1°C
<b>Precipitation and Obscuration:</b>			
<b>Departure Point:</b>	Albuquerque, NM	<b>Type of Flight Plan Filed:</b>	None
<b>Destination:</b>	Rio Rancho, NM	<b>Type of Clearance:</b>	None
<b>Departure Time:</b>	07:30 Local	<b>Type of Airspace:</b>	Class G

## Wreckage and Impact Information

<b>Crew Injuries:</b>	1 Serious	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Passenger Injuries:</b>	1 Serious	<b>Aircraft Fire:</b>	Both in-flight and on-ground
<b>Ground Injuries:</b>	N/A	<b>Aircraft Explosion:</b>	In-flight
<b>Total Injuries:</b>	2 Serious	<b>Latitude, Longitude:</b>	35.314723,-106.648612(est)

## Administrative Information

**Investigator In Charge (IIC):** Bowling, David

**Additional Participating Persons:**

**Original Publish Date:** February 3, 2014

**Last Revision Date:**

**Investigation Class:** [Class](#)

**Note:**

**Investigation Docket:** <https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=88188>

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