



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Wesley Chapel, Florida	Accident Number:	ERA18LA116
Date & Time:	March 24, 2018, 08:45 Local	Registration:	N1517H
Aircraft:	LINDSTRAND BALLOONS 105A	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Collision during takeoff/land	Injuries:	3 Minor
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Aerial observation		

Analysis

The pilot stated that, as the balloon approached the intended landing site, he saw that the area was roped off. He then decided to proceed to his alternate landing site, which was an adjacent field located behind a shopping center. He began a descent toward the alternate site and saw power lines as he passed over the shopping center. The pilot attempted to climb over the powerlines by activating the burners, but upon realizing that it was too late to climb, he secured the fuel and told his passengers to prepare for a hard landing. The balloon descended into the powerlines, resulting in substantial damage to the cables, throat, and scoop; then landed upright in the field. Recorded weather conditions near the accident site included calm wind. The accident is consistent with the pilot's failure to maintain clearance from powerlines during landing approach.

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 powerlines during landing approach, which resulted in an inflight collision with the powerlines.

Findings

Personnel issues	(general) - Pilot
Aircraft	Altitude - Not attained/maintained
Environmental issues	Wire - Contributed to outcome

Factual Information

History of Flight

Landing	Collision during takeoff/land (Defining event)
Uncontrolled descent	Collision with terr/obj (non-CFIT)

On March 24, 2018, about 0845 eastern daylight time, a Lindstrand Balloons 105A, N1517H, was substantially damaged when it was involved in an accident near Wesley Chapel, Florida. The commercial pilot and two passengers sustained minor injuries. The balloon was operated as a Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91 sightseeing flight.

The pilot reported that he was preparing to land, and as the balloon approached the landing site, he saw that the area was roped off. He then decided to land at his alternate landing site, which was an adjacent field located behind a shopping center.

He began a descent toward the alternate site and saw power lines as he passed over the stores. The pilot applied the burners in an attempt to climb, but realized that it was too late and that the balloon was going to hit the powerlines. The pilot told the passengers that there would be a hard landing and to, "get down." The pilot secured the fuel at the burners and the tanks. The balloon descended straight down and the pilot heard a "pop" and felt sparks on his shoulders as the balloon hit the powerlines. The basket landed upright, and witnesses came to assist.

An examination of the balloon by a Federal Aviation Administration inspector revealed that the balloon cables, throat, and scoop were damaged during the collision with the powerlines.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	62, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	None
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Balloon	Restraint Used:	None
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	None None	Last FAA Medical Exam:	March 10, 2018
Occupational Pilot:	Yes	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	339 hours (Total, all aircraft), 193 hours (Total, this make and model), 303 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 2 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 1 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Passenger Information

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

Passenger Information

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

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	LINDSTRAND BALLOONS	Registration:	N1517H
Model/Series:	105A NO SERIES	Aircraft Category:	Balloon
Year of Manufacture:	2007	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Balloon	Serial Number:	5371
Landing Gear Type:	None	Seats:	
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	April 11, 2017 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1800 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	
Airframe Total Time:	193.4 Hrs at time of accident	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:	ZPH,89 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	18 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	08:35 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	270°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	/	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:		Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.23 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	7°C / 7°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Zephyrhills, FL	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Wesley Chapel, FL	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	07:45 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	2 Minor	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	3 Minor	Latitude, Longitude:	28.178611,-82.350555(est)

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Alleyne, Eric
Additional Participating Persons:	Greg King; FAA/FSDO; Tampa, FL
Original Publish Date:	June 10, 2021
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 3
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.ntsb.gov/Docket?ProjectID=96952

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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](#).