



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	Cottage Grove, MN	Accident Number:	CHI03LA147
Date & Time:	06/02/2003, 2007 CDT	Registration:	N52461
Aircraft:	Aerostar S-77A	Aircraft Damage:	None
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Serious, 8 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation - Business		

Analysis

A passenger was seriously injured during a hard landing in a balloon ride . The pilot released a line to his chase crew, who were unsuccessful in slowing the balloon down. The pilot then climbed to clear obstacles and deployed the parachute top vent to descend onto a baseball field. The pilot deployed the aero chute vent during flare. The balloon bounced three to four times before stopping.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:
The inadequate touchdown by the pilot.

Findings

Occurrence #1: HARD LANDING
Phase of Operation: LANDING - FLARE/TOUCHDOWN

Findings

1. (C) TOUCHDOWN - INADEQUATE - PILOT IN COMMAND

Factual Information

On June 2, 2003, at 2007 central daylight time, an Aerostar S-77A, N52461, operated by Wiederkehr Balloon International, Inc., experienced a hard landing after a steep approach to a field near Cottage Grove, Minnesota. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed at the time of the accident. The pilot and seven passengers reported no injuries, and one passenger reported serious injuries. The 14 CFR Part 91 balloon ride flight was not operating on a flight plan. The local flight departed about 1900.

The pilot reported that he attempted to land in a hay field. A line was dropped to the chase crew, who were unsuccessful in slowing the balloon down. The crew released the line allowing the balloon to climb over obstacles. The pilot stated he deployed the parachute top vent to descend onto a baseball field. He deployed the aero chute vent to flare the balloon before touching down. The balloon bounced "three or four times" before coming to a stop in the upright position.

A passenger sustained a broken rib.

The ride balloon was undamaged.

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	54, 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:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	12/28/2002
Flight Time:			

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Aerostar	Registration:	N52461
Model/Series:	S-77A	Aircraft Category:	Balloon
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	3031
Landing Gear Type:		Seats:	13
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	06/01/2003, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	2700 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:	0 Hours	Engines:	
Airframe Total Time:	150 Hours	Engine Manufacturer:	
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	
Registered Owner:	Wiederkehr Balloons International Inc.	Rated Power:	
Operator:	Wiederkehr Balloons International Inc.	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	MSP, 841 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	12 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	1953 CDT	Direction from Accident Site:	284°
Lowest Cloud Condition:		Visibility	10 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	Overcast / 20000 ft agl	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	11 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	260°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	29.98 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	16° C / 7° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:			
Departure Point:	Lakeland, MN	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Cottage Grove, MN	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	1900 CDT	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	None
Passenger Injuries:	1 Serious, 7 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious, 8 None	Latitude, Longitude:	44.844444, -92.943056

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Mitchell F Gallo **Report Date:** 12/30/2003

Additional Participating Persons: Dennis Crawford; FAA- Minneapolis FSDO; Minneapolis, MN

Publish Date:

Investigation Docket: NTSB accident and incident dockets serve as permanent archival information for the NTSB's investigations. Dockets released prior to June 1, 2009 are publicly available from the NTSB's Record Management Division at pubinq@ntsb.gov, or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at <http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/>.

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The Independent Safety Board Act, as codified at 49 U.S.C. Section 1154(b), precludes the admission into evidence or use of any part of an NTSB report related to an incident or accident in a civil action for damages resulting from a matter mentioned in the report. A factual report that may be admissible under 49 U.S.C. § 1154(b) is available [here](#).