



National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

Location:	Battle Creek, MI	Accident Number:	CHI07CA189
Date & Time:	07/02/2007, 2045 EDT	Registration:	N4021M
Aircraft:	Cameron Balloons Z-77	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:		Injuries:	1 Minor, 1 None

Flight Conducted Under: Part 91: General Aviation -

Analysis

The balloon caught fire after landing during the Battle Creek Field of Flight Hot Air Balloon Festival. The pilot stated that after approximately one hour in the air, the balloon landed safely in a yard. When the pilot looked up inside the top of the balloon envelope, the "parachute top did not reseal." He attempted to reseal the top by using a "blast of heat" from the burners but it did not work. The pilot "knew the balloon would quickly sink down on top of the basket" so he turned the burners to their horizontal position and prepared to push the envelope fabric away. When the balloon envelope began to descend towards the ground the pilot reported that "we suddenly had a fire in the basket." Both the pilot and passenger were able to exit the basket. The pilot "determined the fire was coming from the burners" so he returned to the basket and turned off the fuel tanks. The fire was subsequently extinguished by the passenger and bystanders. An examination of the balloon after the accident revealed the fuel valve for the whisper burners was in the "on" position.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The whisper burner's fuel valve opening for undetermined reasons, which resulted in a fire after landing. A factor in the accident was the balloon envelope's parachute top not resealing.

Findings

Occurrence #1: FIRE
Phase of Operation: LANDING

Findings

1. (C) BALLOON EQUIPMENT, BURNER SYSTEM - OTHER
2. (C) REASON FOR OCCURRENCE UNDETERMINED
3. (F) BALLOON EQUIPMENT, ENVELOPE - OTHER

Factual Information

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	52, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	None	Seat Occupied:	Unknown
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Balloon	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Unknown	Last Medical Exam:	08/01/2003
Occupational Pilot:		Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	
Flight Time:	895 hours (Total, all aircraft), 31 hours (Total, this make and model)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Manufacturer:	Cameron Balloons	Registration:	N4021M
Model/Series:	Z-77	Aircraft Category:	Balloon
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	6454
Landing Gear Type:	None	Seats:	
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	Unknown	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	0
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	
ELT:	Not installed	Engine Model/Series:	
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	
Operator:	On file	Air Carrier Operating Certificate:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Observation Facility, Elevation:	BTL	Observation Time:	1953 EDT
Distance from Accident Site:		Condition of Light:	Day
Direction from Accident Site:		Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Temperature/Dew Point:	23°C / 5°C
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility	10 Miles
Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	3 knots, 190°	Visibility (RVR):	
Altimeter Setting:	30.23 inches Hg	Visibility (RVV):	
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	unknown, MI	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	Unknown
Destination:	Battle Creek, MI	Type of Clearance:	Unknown
Departure Time:	1930 EDT	Type of Airspace:	

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Fire:	On-Ground
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Minor, 1 None		

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC): Mitchell Gallo **Adopted Date:** 08/30/2007

Additional Participating Persons: Steve Betzer; Federal Aviation Administration - GRR FSDO; Grand Rapids, MI

Publish Date:

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

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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