



# National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

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<b>Location:</b>	Boulder, CO	<b>Accident Number:</b>	LAX08CA209
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	07/02/2008, 0600 MDT	<b>Registration:</b>	N9014W
<b>Aircraft:</b>	AEROSTAR INTERNATIONAL INC S-77A	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	Substantial
<b>Defining Event:</b>		<b>Injuries:</b>	2 Minor, 5 None
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General Aviation - Aerial Observation - Sightseeing		

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## Analysis

The pilot performed a normal cold-inflation of the balloon and instructed the passengers to board. The balloon was suddenly overcome by a gust of wind that pushed the envelope into a tree. The balloon was drawn upward by the wind, with its vent lines still entangled in the tree. As the lines became taut, sections of material ripped from the envelope, resulting in several long vertical tears. The pilot elected to abort the flight due to increasing wind speeds. The pilot attempted to gain control and stabilize the balloon, but it descended and collided with a tree. The basket came to rest about 20 feet above terrain. The pilot stated that there were no preimpact mechanical malfunctions or failures with the balloon.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: An encounter with a sudden gust of wind, which rendered the balloon uncontrollable and led to a collision with a tree.

## Findings

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Occurrence #1: ON GROUND/WATER ENCOUNTER WITH WEATHER  
Phase of Operation: STANDING

### Findings

1. (C) WEATHER CONDITION - GUSTS
2. (C) WEATHER CONDITION - UPDRAFT

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Occurrence #2: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT  
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

### Findings

3. (C) AIRCRAFT CONTROL - NOT POSSIBLE - PILOT IN COMMAND

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Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT  
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

### Findings

4. OBJECT - BUILDING(NONRESIDENTIAL)
5. OBJECT - TREE(S)
6. BALLOON EQUIPMENT, ENVELOPE - TEAR/TORN

## Factual Information

### Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Commercial	<b>Age:</b>	59, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	Balloon	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	None	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>		<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	None	<b>Last Medical Exam:</b>	
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>		<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	
<b>Flight Time:</b>	2810 hours (Total, all aircraft), 1000 hours (Total, this make and model)		

### Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

<b>Aircraft Manufacturer:</b>	AEROSTAR INTERNATIONAL INC	<b>Registration:</b>	N9014W
<b>Model/Series:</b>	S-77A	<b>Aircraft Category:</b>	Balloon
<b>Year of Manufacture:</b>		<b>Amateur Built:</b>	No
<b>Airworthiness Certificate:</b>	Normal	<b>Serial Number:</b>	S77A-3024
<b>Landing Gear Type:</b>	None	<b>Seats:</b>	
<b>Date/Type of Last Inspection:</b>	05/01/2008, 100 Hour	<b>Certified Max Gross Wt.:</b>	
<b>Time Since Last Inspection:</b>		<b>Engines:</b>	0
<b>Airframe Total Time:</b>		<b>Engine Manufacturer:</b>	
<b>ELT:</b>	Not installed	<b>Engine Model/Series:</b>	
<b>Registered Owner:</b>	COLORADO ROCKY BALLOONING LLC	<b>Rated Power:</b>	
<b>Operator:</b>	Tommy Cederlund	<b>Air Carrier Operating Certificate:</b>	None
<b>Operator Does Business As:</b>	Sunny Day Come Fly Away	<b>Operator Designator Code:</b>	

## Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Observation Facility, Elevation:	BJC, 5673 ft msl	Observation Time:	0550 MDT
Distance from Accident Site:	12 Nautical Miles	Condition of Light:	Dawn
Direction from Accident Site:	160°	Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual Conditions
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Temperature/Dew Point:	
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility	10 Miles
Wind Speed/Gusts, Direction:	6 knots, 310°	Visibility (RVR):	
Altimeter Setting:		Visibility (RVV):	
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Boulder, CO	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:		Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	MDT	Type of Airspace:	

## Airport Information

Airport:	Boulder Municipal Airport (KBDU)	Runway Surface Type:	
Airport Elevation:		Runway Surface Condition:	
Runway Used:	NA	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:		VFR Approach/Landing:	Unknown

## Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	2 Minor, 4 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Minor, 5 None		

## Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Zoë Keliher	Adopted Date:	09/26/2008
Additional Participating Persons:	Jeff Graves; Federal Aviation Administration; Denver, CO		
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 <a href="mailto:pubinq@ntsb.gov">pubinq@ntsb.gov</a> , or at 800-877-6799. Dockets released after this date are available at <a href="http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/">http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/</a> .		

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