



# National Transportation Safety Board Aviation Accident Final Report

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<b>Location:</b>	Murfreesboro, TN	<b>Accident Number:</b>	ERA17LA243
<b>Date &amp; Time:</b>	07/14/2017, 1930 CDT	<b>Registration:</b>	N3282P
<b>Aircraft:</b>	BALLOON WORKS FIREFLY 8B 15	<b>Aircraft Damage:</b>	None
<b>Defining Event:</b>	Ground handling event	<b>Injuries:</b>	1 Serious, 1 None
<b>Flight Conducted Under:</b>	Part 91: General Aviation - Aerial Observation - Sightseeing		

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## Analysis

According to the commercial pilot, after a successful sightseeing balloon flight, all the passengers exited the gondola and were helping the pilot secure the balloon. As they were holding on to the maneuvering handles, the balloon began to ascend; the pilot directed the passengers to "let go" of the gondola, and all except one released the maneuvering handles. The passenger who did not let go was carried about 30 ft into the air before he let go and fell to the ground; he sustained serious injuries. The pilot regained control of the balloon and landed.

## Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be:

The passenger's failure to let go of the balloon's gondola when the balloon began to ascend. Contributing to the accident was the pilot's failure to maintain control of the balloon after landing, which resulted in an inadvertent takeoff.

## Findings

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<b>Personnel issues</b>	Delayed action - Passenger (Cause) Aircraft control - Pilot (Factor)
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## Factual Information

On July 14, 2017, about 1930 central daylight time, a Balloon Works, Firefly 8B-15, N3282P, ascended unintentionally after landing near Murfreesboro, Tennessee. The commercial pilot was not injured and one passenger was seriously injured. The commercial sightseeing flight was conducted under the provisions of Title 14 *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 91. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and no flight plan was filed for the local flight.

According to the pilot, after a successful flight, all three passengers exited the gondola and were assisting the pilot in securing the balloon. As they were holding on to the maneuvering handles the balloon began to ascend. The pilot directed everyone to "let go" but one of the passengers continued to hold on to the maneuvering handles. As the gondola ascended the passenger was carried about 30 ft into the air, before letting go and falling to the ground. The pilot regained control of the balloon and landed.

## History of Flight

After landing	Ground handling event (Defining event)
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## Pilot Information

<b>Certificate:</b>	Airline Transport; Commercial	<b>Age:</b>	53, Male
<b>Airplane Rating(s):</b>	Multi-engine Land	<b>Seat Occupied:</b>	None
<b>Other Aircraft Rating(s):</b>	Balloon	<b>Restraint Used:</b>	
<b>Instrument Rating(s):</b>	Airplane	<b>Second Pilot Present:</b>	No
<b>Instructor Rating(s):</b>	Airplane Multi-engine; Airplane Single-engine; Instrument Airplane	<b>Toxicology Performed:</b>	No
<b>Medical Certification:</b>	Class 1 With Waivers/Limitations	<b>Last FAA Medical Exam:</b>	02/22/2017
<b>Occupational Pilot:</b>	Yes	<b>Last Flight Review or Equivalent:</b>	07/30/2017
<b>Flight Time:</b>	12300 hours (Total, all aircraft), 301 hours (Total, this make and model), 6600 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 290 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 90 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

## Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	BALLOON WORKS	Registration:	N3282P
Model/Series:	FIREFLY 8B 15 UNDESIGNAT	Aircraft Category:	Balloon
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	No
Airworthiness Certificate:	Balloon	Serial Number:	F8B-520
Landing Gear Type:		Seats:	0
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	04/01/2017, Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1900 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	
Airframe Total Time:	309 Hours as of last inspection	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 Conditions	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	MQY, 543 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	10 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	1938 CDT	Direction from Accident Site:	319°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 Miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	4 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	280°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.1 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	27° C / 23° C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Murfreesboro, TN	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Murfreesboro, TN	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	1900 CDT	Type of Airspace:	Class E

## Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	None
Passenger Injuries:	1 Serious	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	1 Serious, 1 None	Latitude, Longitude:	35.845556, -86.390278 (est)

## Administrative Information

<b>Investigator In Charge (IIC):</b>	Eric Alleyne	<b>Report Date:</b>	09/27/2019
<b>Additional Participating Persons:</b>	Aaron deVogel; FAA/FSDO; Nashville, TN		
<b>Publish Date:</b>	09/27/2019		
<b>Note:</b>	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.		
<b>Investigation Docket:</b>	<a href="http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/search/dockList.cfm?mKey=95579">http://dms.nts.gov/pubdms/search/dockList.cfm?mKey=95579</a>		

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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](#).