



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Erie, Colorado	Accident Number:	CEN23LA325
Date & Time:	July 14, 2023, 06:50 Local	Registration:	N1958S
Aircraft:	ULTRAMAGIC SA N-210	Aircraft Damage:	None
Defining Event:	Hard landing	Injuries:	2 Serious, 2 Minor, 3 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Air race/show		

Analysis

The pilot reported that while conducting a sightseeing flight, the surface wind increased earlier than forecast. He decided to terminate the flight and make a high wind landing. He briefed his passengers that they were going to land quickly and drag to a stop. He reminded them to stay in the basket and hold on. The balloon skipped twice after contacting the ground and then dragged to a stop. One of the passengers was ejected and her hair was caught under the basket. She sustained minor injuries. Two other passengers remained in the basket but sustained serious injuries. The pilot sustained minor injuries and the remaining three passengers were not injured. The pilot reported there were no mechanical malfunctions or failures with the balloon that would have precluded normal operation.

Prior to the flight, the pilot obtained a weather brief, and the weather forecast reported a front to pass around 0800. A terminal aerodrome forecast (TAF) for Rocky Mountain Metro Airport (BJC) about 7 miles southwest of Erie, Colorado, forecast wind to be out of the northwest at 7 knots at 0300 and then shift to wind out of the northeast at 12 knots around 0800. When the pilot launched the balloon in Erie at 0638, the wind was calm. About half an hour after launch, reported surface wind in Erie was out of the northeast at 5 knots gusting 15 knots.

Probable Cause and Findings

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

A hard landing due to the high wind conditions which resulted in two passengers sustaining serious injuries.

Findings

Aircraft	Landing flare - Not attained/maintained
Environmental issues	High wind - Effect on operation

Factual Information

History of Flight

Maneuvering	Other weather encounter
Landing	Hard landing (Defining event)

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Commercial	Age:	57,Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Unknown
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	Balloon	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	
Medical Certification:	Class 2 With waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	April 18, 2023
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	March 6, 2023
Flight Time:	2680 hours (Total, all aircraft), 200 hours (Total, this make and model)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	ULTRAMAGIC SA	Registration:	N1958S
Model/Series:	N-210 NO SERIES	Aircraft Category:	Balloon
Year of Manufacture:	2021	Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Balloon; Normal	Serial Number:	210/149
Landing Gear Type:	None; Skid	Seats:	1
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	July 31, 2022 100 hour	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	4268 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	0 None
Airframe Total Time:	132 Hrs at time of accident	Engine Manufacturer:	None
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:	KEIK,5132 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	1 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	07:15 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	287°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	5 knots / 15 knots	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	20°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.09 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	18°C / 9°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Erie, CO (NA)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Erie, CO (NA)	Type of Clearance:	VFR
Departure Time:	06:38 Local	Type of Airspace:	Class G

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 Minor	Aircraft Damage:	None
Passenger Injuries:	2 Serious, 1 Minor, 3 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 Serious, 2 Minor, 3 None	Latitude, Longitude:	40.01,-105.02

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Abraham, Laura
Additional Participating Persons:	Brian Seibel; FAA FSDO; Denver, CO
Original Publish Date:	November 9, 2023
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class 4
Note:	The NTSB did not travel to the scene of this accident.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=192716

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