

COPY

Record of Telephone Conversation

Name: Robert Fisher, Pilot in Command, (PIC) N40104
Address: [REDACTED]
Phone: [REDACTED]
Date: 9/3/2015
Description: PIC statement regarding accident of August 15, 2015.

This Inspector conducted a telephone interview with Mr. Robert Fisher, (Fisher) regarding the accident of August 15, 2015, involving hot air balloon, N40104.

Fisher stated he contacted the passengers and informed them of a launch at approximately 1830 hours local. Fisher reviewed the weather forecast via local television websites and considered the forecast winds to be acceptable. The launch location was established at the Harvest Drive Hotel in Intercourse, PA.

The balloon was launched at 1850 local with winds estimated by the PIC to be 6-8 mph. At approximately 1940 hours, the PIC selected a landing site north of New Holland, PA. Fisher estimated 10 - 15 minutes of daylight was remaining before sunset. Fisher was in contact with the chase team by radio, who had visual contact with the balloon. Fisher advised them of the intended landing site. This location is a open hay field, rectangular in shape, approximate 150 feet by 600 feet, oriented east and west. The address is 649 North Railroad Ave. New Holland, PA.

Fisher stated he started his landing deflation and reheating in normal fashion prior to crossing Railroad Ave. and continued with the deflating just prior to touchdown. The balloon was traveling in a northeastly direction. Fisher stated he was aware of the power lines at the north side of the landing site.

Fisher briefed the two (2) passengers on the landing procedure and advised them to position themselves at the rear of the gondola and to hold on to the uprights. Fisher considered conditions normal for a 5 mph landing and continued with the touchdown. The balloon landed in a vertical position and slid for approximately 30 feet when the ground crew was able to stop and secure the gondola. Fisher estimated the gondola tilted to approximately 30 degrees while sliding. The passenger remained in their secured positions and they indicated the landing was acceptable.

Fisher considers the touchdown to be normal. After being secured by the ground crew, Fisher realized he was closer to the power lines than he expected. Upon shutting off one (1) fuel tank, he was advised by the ground crew that the envelope was quickly deflating. Fisher then noted the deflation vent rope (top line) was outside the gondola and caught underneath the bottom of the gondola. The top line appeared tight and was holding the deflate vent open.

While attempting to free the deflate top line, the ground crew announced the envelope was still deflating and getting close to the power lines. It was at this time he felt the electric shock. The basket was leaning in the downwind direction and he fell out of the basket. Fisher stated he did not lose consciousness but was unable to move for a few seconds. He regained his movement and noticed the two passengers lying partially in the basket and in contact with the ground. He

assisted the two passengers away from the balloon. The male passenger was moaning and moving slowly while lying on the ground and the female passenger was quiet and still. Fisher then realized all of them had received an electrical shock.

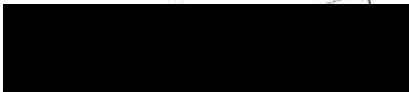
A ground crew member, who is volunteer fire department member, realized CPR was necessary for the female and began to administer aid. Fisher stated the local police and EMS were on site within less than five (5) minutes and cared for him and the passengers. Both passengers were transported to a local hospital for treatment.

Fisher initially refused medical treatment but was then transported to the hospital for treatment. Fisher stated that while removing the passengers from the basket, he noticed the female had burn marks on her hands. He did not know the injuries sustained by the male passenger. Fisher stated he received electrical burns on his back and the lower area of his left leg.

Fisher stated this is the first time he has experienced a top line getting caught under a basket and did not realize the envelope was deflating so quickly. Fisher believes the upper portion of the envelope contacted the wires and slid off. He is not sure what conducted the electricity to the basket, because there are not metal conductors at the balloon top, except for the temperature probe wiring which is inside the envelope.

Fisher stated the balloon will be inspected and repaired at Lancaster Balloonport, Inc. at the Lancaster Airport upon release by the FAA. Fisher stated he will be changing his procedures for selecting landing sites and would not select a confined area such as this one in the future. He also stated that he will be developing a procedure to ensure the top line is within the basket prior to touchdown.

Fisher was advised he would be contacted by this office, regarding release of the aircraft upon consultation with the NTSB.



James H. Pool
Aviation Safety Inspector