

8/7/16 At approximately 6:45 pm on Aug 6th a balloon, N317W, piloted by Mr. Frederick O'Hara (pilot certificate # [REDACTED]. Phone # [REDACTED]), with 5 non-paying passengers experienced a hard landing in the town of Northwood NH. The pilot stated that when he hit the ground it was a bit rough and the basket momentarily tipped on its side then immediately righted itself as he gained control of the balloon. The basket dragged approximately 5 feet before coming to a stop, upright. No passengers were thrown from the basket at any point. The balloon, a Firefly 105 AX8, had picked up the passengers at the Pittsfield, NH Hot Air Balloon Festival. The passengers consisted of two teenaged boys, a couple and an elderly man (possibly 88 years old) who cut his wrist during the hard landing and may have slightly fractured his pelvis. No other injuries to any of the other passengers. The injured man's name is Mr. Carlson and he had flown, in the past, with this pilot on a half dozen balloon flights according to the pilot. The pilot also stated that Mr. Carlson's wrist laceration presumably bled heavily, in part, due to a blood thinner he takes. A firefighter happened to be at the landing sight and assisted the injured and called an ambulance to the scene. Mr. O'Hara said he spoke with the injured man this morning and that he is in good spirits. Also on the scene was police officer Bob Wharem ([REDACTED]). When I received the call from the ROC at approximately 6:45pm, the balloon had already been packed up and was off the scene.

Officer Wharem confirmed the injured man's name as Fred Carlson. He also confirmed Mr. Carlson broke his right pelvis and was admitted to the Concord, NH hospital where he apparently underwent surgery of some kind, and is looking at a long recovery. My understanding is that Mr. Carlson's injuries were of a serious nature. Additionally the officer stated that the Pittsfield balloon festival include approximately 15- 18 other balloons. Due to weather conditions Mr. O'Hara was the only balloon to launch, all others stayed put. The police are gathering weather information from the Gray, Maine weather service and conducted witness interviews. Officer Wharem will email me more information (passenger details etc.) tomorrow. When the police report is finalized they will share that. The department is contemplating pressing charges (reckless endangerment) against the pilot. Photos of the accident scene were taken by Officer Wharem and I should have them tomorrow. Witness accounts *may* differ from the pilot's accounts. Officer Wharem stated witnesses said the balloon bounced when it hit the ground and then may have dragged for up to 100 feet.

8/9/16 a.m. Additional information on the Northwood, NH balloon accident (N317W):

The Pittsfield balloon festival is organized and made possible by the efforts of the Suncook Valley Rotary Club. My only avenue to contact them was through an automated email system on their website. I emailed the President, Lynne Marston, requesting the weather conditions at the time of liftoff and all the festival's balloon pilot's contact information in an effort to substantiate that N317W was in fact the only balloon to liftoff at or about the 5:30 p.m. designated time. I received a call back from Scott Brown, the Treasurer of the Rotary Club, on behalf of Ms. Marston. Mr. Brown also coordinates the matching of balloon sponsors with the various balloon operators'. Mr. Brown was reluctant about giving me contact information for the pilots. However, he did confirm that prior to the launch several test balloons were launched to check the winds and a Public Address announcement was called out announcing the winds as changeable. Mr. Brown also stated that it was known that thunderstorms were piling up in the Laconia area when the liftoff time of 5:30 p.m. arrived. Mr. O'Hara was quick to launch and the other 16 pilots *all* chose NOT to launch. It is my opinion the Suncook Valley Rotary Club is very safety conscious when it comes to this festival. In years past this festival had a Balloon Meister, who would make the final go or no go calls for lifting off. In recent years, due to liability, no pilot has stepped up to take that responsibility, so ultimately each pilot makes the final decision to lift off or not. Yesterday afternoon I once again spoke to the police officer on scene, Officer Wharem. He confirmed that he was going to

send me the balloon's passenger list/contact information and photographs taken at the scene. He was also going to visit the man injured in the accident, Fred Carlson, at the Concord hospital and update me on his condition. I was expecting my inbox to contain these emails this morning, but have yet to receive them. I am headed out to the Northwood Police department this morning with a memory stick. More to come.....