

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
Washington, D. C. 20594

PASSENGER STATEMENT

The National Transportation Safety Board, a Federal Agency, is charged by an Act of Congress with the investigation of transportation accidents. The Safety Board issues reports and makes recommendations to other federal and local agencies and to the industry to prevent future accidents and to prevent unnecessary injuries caused by such accidents.

We would appreciate very much your assistance in giving us the benefit of your personal observations and comments regarding this accident so that we may better evaluate the facts, conditions and circumstances surrounding this accident. Your observations also could assist us greatly in our evaluation of the cause of injuries as well as the adequacy of equipment and procedures affecting your survival and escape.

In addition to completing the following specific information, please feel free to comment on any aspect, before, during or after the accident, that you believe may have had a bearing on the accident cause or on subsequent events.

STATEMENT

Name: EDD LANGE Age: 68 Height: 5'-7" Weight: 150
Address: [REDACTED] CALABASH, NC [REDACTED]
Occupation: RETIRED Telephone: [REDACTED]
Injuries: TWISTED KNEE, SORE BACK & RIBS

If you sustained injuries and were treated, provide name and address of doctor or treatment facility:

Are you handicapped (through vision, missing limbs, spinal problems, etc., which may affect your movements.) Please specify:

no

Seat Location: If you do not recall your seat number, please specify your position as on the left or right, aisle or window location, number of rows from the front or back, near a specific door or any other method which will assist in locating your position.

N/A

A. MY OBSERVATIONS BEFORE THE ACCIDENT

Describe your observations before the accident happened such as the weather conditions; the lighting conditions; whether or not you have a seatbelt fastened; your outside observations, etc.

CLEAR SKIES

45° - 50°

CALM WINDS AT TAKEOFF

GUSTY BLOWING WINDS ON LANDING

B. MY OBSERVATIONS DURING THE ACCIDENT

Describe the accident circumstances considering such things as any unusual occurrences during the accident; the presence of fire or smoke; the direction in which you were thrown; the severity of the impact; etc.

SEE ATTACHED EXPLANATION

C. MY OBSERVATIONS AFTER THE ACCIDENT

Describe your method of escape and any difficulties encountered with your seat, seatbelt, debris, etc.; the reaction and behavior of other passengers; your observations of any outside rescue attempts; any occurrence which seemed unusual to you; etc.

SEE ATTACHED

D. OTHER GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

You may use this space to comment on any other aspect of the accident or you may sketch the general accident scene as you observed it, your escape method or the location of fire, etc.

SEE ATTACHED


Signature

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STATEMENT

Name: NANCY LANGE Age: 66 Height: 5'2" Weight: 150
Address: [REDACTED] CALABASH NC [REDACTED]
Occupation: Retired Telephone: [REDACTED]
Injuries: Bruised foot - swollen

If you sustained injuries and were treated, provide name and address of doctor or treatment facility:

No

Are you handicapped (through vision, missing limbs, spinal problems, etc., which may affect your movements.)
Please specify:

No

Seat Location: If you do not recall your seat number, please specify your position as on the left or right, aisle or window location, number of rows from the front or back, near a specific door or any other method which will assist in locating your position.

N/A

A. MY OBSERVATIONS BEFORE THE ACCIDENT

Describe your observations before the accident happened such as the weather conditions; the lighting conditions; whether or not you have a seatbelt fastened; your outside observations, etc.

CLEAR SKIES

45°-50°

Calm Winds AT TAKEOFF

Gusty Blowing winds on Landing

B. MY OBSERVATIONS DURING THE ACCIDENT

Describe the accident circumstances considering such things as any unusual occurrences during the accident; the presence of fire or smoke; the direction in which you were thrown; the severity of the impact; etc.

See ATTACHED EXPLANATION

C. MY OBSERVATIONS AFTER THE ACCIDENT

Describe your method of escape and any difficulties encountered with your seat, seatbelt, debris, etc.; the reaction and behavior of other passengers; your observations of any outside rescue attempts; any occurrence which seemed unusual to you; etc.

SEE ATTACHED

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SEE ATTACHED


Signature

The following is our recollection of the Hot Air Balloon incident on October 22, 2016 at the Carolina Balloon Fest:

We met Matt Lidinsky about 6:45am Saturday morning Oct. 22. He advised us to go to the big tent for a briefing for the balloon pilots. At the briefing, we were all advised of the wind conditions. We were advised that the winds were calm but could expect them to increase later in the day.

After the briefing we met Matt and the other passengers at the balloon launch area. While the balloon was being set up he asked us to help watch out for power lines during the flight and told us that during landing, we should bend our knees and hang on with both hands and face the front of the basket. He told us the areas on the basket to hang onto and where not to hang onto. He told us that in the event of a rough or hard landing he would advise us before we landed that it would be a hard landing and we should face the direction we were landing and hang on with both hands. He said that in the event of a rough landing, the basket would tip over and that we needed to keep our arms and legs inside the basket and stay inside the basket until we came to a stop.

The balloon lifted off around 7:35am. It was a very smooth flight and once in the air Matt went over the landing procedures again.

When we found a hay field that looked like a good landing place, we descended. My wife and I were in the back of the basket and the other couple was in front facing the landing area. As we got closer to landing, Matt (pilot) told us to hang on with both hands because it was going to be a hard landing and the basket would probably tip over. Just before we hit the ground he said "put down your cameras and hang on with both hands". We hit the ground hard and then we went back into the air for a very short time. Matt again, told us to hang on as we were going to hit hard again. This time we hit even harder and the basket tipped over. While we were being dragged across the field, Matt yelled at us to try to keep the other lady inside the basket as she appeared to be sliding out. When the balloon deflated and we came to a stop he asked if we were all OK. We told him we were sore and kind of beat up but not seriously hurt. The other lady said she was hurt and could not move. The rest of us got out of the balloon and Matt called for help then tended to the injured lady until paramedics arrived on the site within 15-20 minutes.

[REDACTED]

12-02-16

[REDACTED]

12-2-16

Hello,

On the morning of 10/22/16 my wife, Mirela Savu, me, Robert Howard, and another couple me with Matt for the balloon flight. We signed a waiver form for the flight and were given a short briefing about what to expect on the flight and that to stay in the basket and keep hands inside upon landing. Lift-off and flight was smooth and uneventful, very nice flight dropping into some open areas and coming back up, skimming the tree tops and such. Towards the end Matt was trying to locate a suitable landing site and finally came upon one, the wind was picking up and the field was slightly up slope. Matt could see that the landing was not going to go well, he told everyone that it was going to be a hard landing and to hold on and keep hands inside. The basket hit hard and Matt was trying to also make the balloon rise to lessen the impact. It was a hard hit, we were thrown forwards, the basket went on its side and the wind pulled it along at the same time as the balloon went back into the air for a few seconds. The basket then made another hard landing and turned on its side and was dragged along a good ways with my wife getting the worst of it as she was on the bottom being dragged along the ground. The balloon finally stopped being dragged by the wind and we exited the turned over basket, my wife on the bottom, the me beside her, and Matt and the other couple on top of us. Ambulance came to get my wife, she ended up with a slight fracture to one vertebrae and to her left wrist also, plus scrapes to her face from being dragged on the ground, and plenty of bruising from everyone being on top. Good flight but did not anticipate nor were we prepared for that kind of an outcome from a balloon landing.

Robert Howard

Mirela Savu

11/4/16