

Airlander 10: World's Longest Aircraft Collapses at Cardington

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Image copyrightSBNAImage captionThe airlander collapsed at Cardington Airfield, where it is based

The world's longest aircraft has collapsed to the ground less than 24 hours after a successful test flight.

The Airlander 10 - a combination of a plane and an airship - was seen to "break in two" at an airfield in Bedfordshire, an eyewitness said.

Owner Hybrid Air Vehicles Ltd said it appeared the Airlander broke free from its mooring mast, triggering a safety system which deflates the aircraft.

Two people on the ground suffered minor injuries.

'Minimizes damage'

It was not flying and was not due to fly, Hybrid Air Vehicles said.

No one was on board, but a female member of staff suffered minor injuries and was taken to hospital as a precaution.

A colleague also sustained minor injuries while dealing with the incident.

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"The safety feature is to ensure our aircraft minimizes any potential damage to its surroundings in these circumstances," Hybrid Air Vehicles added.

"The aircraft is now deflated and secure on the edge of the airfield. The fuel and helium inside the Airlander have been made safe.

"We are testing a brand new type of aircraft and incidents of this nature can occur during this phase of development.

"We will assess the cause of the incident and the extent of repairs needed to the aircraft in the next few weeks."



Image copyrightSBNAImage captionThe company that owns the Airlander said it was not flying at the time

On Friday, the Airlander took off at 15:11 GMT and landed at 16:18 GMT at Cardington Airfield.

Hybrid Air Vehicles Ltd had said it was now in the "next phase of extended test flights".

It will soon "fly higher, faster, further and longer", the company said.

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Image copyrightBEDS CAMBS HERTS ROAD POLICINGImage captionThe Airlander is the longest aircraft in the world at 302ft (92m)

In August 2016 the aircraft crash-landed after climbing to an excessive height because its mooring line became caught on power cables.

The 302ft (92m) long aircraft nosedived after the test flight at Cardington. No one was injured.

The Air Accidents Investigation Branch said the line was hanging free after a first landing attempt had failed.

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Image copyrightHYBRID AIR VEHICLESImage captionAirlander 10 completed its sixth test flight on Friday

- Reference:
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