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Hood Blimp Crash Lands In Manchester-By-The-Sea

(CBS4) MANCHESTER-BY-THE-SEA The Hood Blimp, a fixture in the sky over the Boston area, crash landed in the woods in Manchester-By-The-Sea Tuesday afternoon.

The pilot, Leigh Bradbury, lost control of the rudder shortly after takeoff, then tried to land the blimp on nearby Singing Beach just after noon, but he didn't make it. The blimp ended up on top of several trees about 30 feet above the ground.

Bradbury was not hurt but it took rescue personnel two hours to free him. The wooded area was inaccessible to rescue vehicles. Bradbury put on a harness, which was attached to a rescue rope and rappelled to the ground, State Police Lt. Dermot Quinn said.

A 12-man team from Beverly Airport is working to deflate the blimp so it can be removed from the area, which is near the airport and an elementary school. This process could take a few days.

Michael Kenny, 51, of Peabody, noticed the blimp while in Beverly to get lunch. The 51-year-old carpenter

said he had taken a ride in the same blimp one month ago.

"It was moving up and down like a whale in the water," as if fighting the wind, Kenny said. "He was only turning in one direction."

Bradbury was doing "exposure flying" -- or recreational flying -- and was not on a business run, said Mickey Wittman, director of client services for Lightship Group of Orlando, Fla., which owns the aircraft. It rents advertising space to Hood.

Lynne Bohan, a spokeswoman for the dairy food company, said the blimp had been scheduled to fly above the Red Sox game at Fenway Park on Tuesday night.

The A-60 Airship was manufactured by American Blimp Corp., the parent company of Lightship Group, Wittman said.

"Occasionally it happens," he said of blimp accidents. "I've never known anyone to be hurt."

The Federal Aviation Administration and the Massachusetts Aeronautics Commission are investigating.

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The pilot lost control of the rudder, then tried to beach the blimp, but ended up landing on several trees.

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The blimp was stuck about 30 feet above the ground after it finally came down.

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