

## **“Fiesta Flight Plan” - A Pilot Mentorship Program**

The “Fiesta Flight Plan” Mentor/Mentee Program is designed to help pilots build confidence, familiarity, and readiness for the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta through hands-on guidance from an experienced Mentor Pilot.

Created especially for Fiesta pilots, the program provides support at every stage of the event from the application process to flight operations and on-field procedures. Mentors offer insight into event logistics, operational expectations, decision-making, culture, and safety standards to help ensure a smooth and successful first experience.

The program is intended to provide practical guidance and support, allowing new pilots to navigate Fiesta with clarity and confidence while focusing on safe operations and fully experiencing the event.

### **Mentor/Mentee Program Requirements and Overview**

A Mentee Pilot must fly as appropriate for all Balloon Fiesta events in the presence of their assigned Mentor Pilot. The Mentor Pilot remains actively involved in all flight-related decisions and provides real-time guidance, support, and oversight throughout the event.

### **Key characteristics of the Mentor/Mentee Program include:**

- During the application process, the Mentee will register as the Primary Pilot, while the Mentor will be registered as the Additional Pilot.
- The Mentor and Mentee fly together as appropriate for all Balloon Fiesta flights
- The Mentor provides safety-focused guidance and operational support
- The Mentee gains hands-on experience with Balloon Fiesta logistics, field operations, and decision-making
- The program is designed to prepare pilots for future independent participation as Primary Pilots
- Mentor feedback may be used to help assess a Mentee’s readiness to fly independently in future years

This program is ideal for pilots who are newer to Fiesta, seeking to build confidence, or looking to deepen their understanding of Balloon Fiesta operations within a structured and supportive environment.

### **Pilot-in-Command (PIC) Limitations**

Mentee Pilots participating in the Mentor/Mentee Program will register as the Primary Pilot during the application process. While enrolled in the program, the Mentee may act as Pilot-in-Command (PIC) only when flying with their assigned Mentor Pilot or another approved Pilot designated under the Mentor/Mentee agreement.

Following a minimum of four (4) Fiesta flights, the Mentor Pilot may provide an evaluation of the Mentee’s readiness. Based on this evaluation and program approval, the Mentee may be considered for release from Mentor-required PIC limitations. Until such release is formally granted, unsupervised flight by a Mentee Pilot during Fiesta events is not permitted.

PIC authority under the Mentor/Mentee Program is limited to Fiesta-related flights originating from or operating into Balloon Fiesta Park during official event days and times.

### **Restricted Flight Activities**

While enrolled in the Mentor/Mentee Program, Mentee Pilots may not act as PIC for the following flight types, regardless of Mentor presence or flight count:

- Corporate or sponsor flights
- Government Relations or VIP flights
- Media flights
- Official Ride Concessionaire operations

These restrictions ensure that Mentor/Mentee flights remain focused on training, safety, and gaining a thorough understanding of Balloon Fiesta operations.

### **Program Basis and Intent**

Assignment to the Mentor/Mentee Program may be based on a variety of factors, including, but not limited to:

- Limited prior Balloon Fiesta participation
- Limited experience flying in high-density balloon environments
- Recent flight activity levels
- Time since pilot certification
- Recent safety seminar participation

Placement in the Mentor/Mentee Program is **not** a judgment of pilot skill or capability. Rather, it is a proactive measure intended to promote safety, build confidence, and support a successful integration into Balloon Fiesta operations.

### **Compliance and Accountability**

All Mentor and Mentee Pilots are expected to fully comply with the requirements of the Mentor/Mentee Program, associated agreements, and all Balloon Fiesta operational policies and procedures. Failure to meet program expectations may result in removal from the program and/or disqualification from current or future Fiesta events.

<b>Feature</b>	<b>Mentor/Mentee Program</b>
<b>Primary Purpose</b>	Guided learning and structured integration into Balloon Fiesta operations
<b>Intended For</b>	Pilots newer to Fiesta or seeking additional confidence and operational guidance
<b>Application Registration</b>	Mentee registers as <b>Primary Pilot</b> ; Mentor registers as <b>Additional Pilot</b>
<b>Pilot-in-Command (PIC) Authority</b>	Mentee may act as PIC only when flying with the assigned Mentor or an approved Pilot under the Mentor/Mentee agreement
<b>In-Flight Supervision</b>	Continuous Mentor involvement in flight-related decisions
<b>Minimum Flight Requirement</b>	Minimum of four (4) Fiesta flights required before independent PIC consideration
<b>Release to Independent PIC</b>	Possible following Mentor evaluation and formal program approval

Feature	Mentor/Mentee Program
<b>Solo Flight Allowed during Balloon Fiesta</b>	No, until formal release from Mentor-required PIC limitations is granted
<b>Operational Scope</b>	Fiesta-related flights operating to or from Balloon Fiesta Park during official event days and times
<b>Restricted Flight Activities</b>	Corporate/sponsor, Government Relations/VIP, media, and ride concessionaire flights
<b>Program Focus</b>	“Fiesta Flight Plan,” safety, decision-making, culture, and field operations
<b>Evaluation of Pilot Skill</b>	Not an evaluation of flying skill; focused on readiness and operational understanding
<b>Program Outcome</b>	Preparation for potential future participation as an independent Primary Pilot