

“Fiesta Flight Plan” Mentor / Mentee Program

Mentor Guidelines & Expectations

Program Purpose

The “Fiesta Flight Plan” Mentor/Mentee Program pairs experienced Balloon Fiesta pilots with newer or returning pilots to support learning, safety awareness, and confidence while navigating Fiesta operations, culture, and expectations.

As a Mentor, you play a vital role in shaping a positive, informed, and safe Fiesta experience.

Your Role as a Mentor

Mentors serve as experienced, supportive guides, helping mentees understand how Fiesta works, both operationally and culturally, while encouraging independence, good judgment, and safety-focused decision-making.

Mentors do not replace official Balloon Fiesta staff, Safety, Launch Directors, or other departments.

Support & Communication

- The Program Liaison is your primary point of contact for program coordination and questions
 - Use the Program Liaison to:
 - Clarify timelines or expectations
 - Flag recurring issues or concerns
 - Escalate questions that require staff involvement
 - Official Balloon Fiesta decisions, approvals, or exceptions must always come from Fiesta staff
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Mentor Responsibilities

Before Fiesta

- Participate in mentor meetings or briefings, as available
- Review mentor resources and guidance provided by the Program Liaison
- If possible, fly with your mentee before Fiesta to:
 - Review setup and teardown procedures
 - Walk through safety checklists
 - Assess equipment readiness
- Encourage or participate in a pre-Fiesta safety meeting with the mentee’s crew

During Fiesta

- Provide guidance on:
 - Launch site selection and logistics
 - Launch square etiquette and coordination
 - Interactions with Zebras, Safety, volunteers, and other pilots
 - Reinforce patience and sound decision-making, especially on marginal weather days
 - Model respectful behavior toward staff, volunteers, landowners, and the public
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Mentor Approach

- Empower mentees to make their own decisions
 - Avoid directing or overriding the mentee’s judgment unless safety is at risk
 - Emphasize safety, preparedness, and professionalism
 - Encourage use of the mentee’s own balloon during Fiesta whenever possible
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Professional Expectations

Mentors are expected to:

- Represent Balloon Fiesta and the “Fiesta Flight Plan” Program positively
 - Follow all Fiesta policies, procedures, and codes of conduct
 - Avoid speculation or unofficial guidance
 - Immediately report safety concerns to Fiesta staff
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Mentor Acknowledgment

By participating as a Mentor, you acknowledge that your role is advisory and supportive in nature and that official Balloon Fiesta staff retain all operational, safety, and regulatory authority.