



BALLOON OPERATIONS MANUAL

Rules & Regulations



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Section 1 Balloon Operations Manual

I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta (AIBF) will present its 54th edition as a major ballooning event. More than 550 balloons and 700 pilots are expected to participate in this year's events October 3 through October 11, 2026.

This manual is submitted as a part of an application for a Waiver of Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) part 91, §§ 91.119 (b) and (c), 91.130 (c) (1) and (d), 91.209 (a) and 91.215 (b) and (c) and 91.225.

Throughout this Operations Manual the masculine form is used as a standard. Wherever the masculine form is used, it is implied that the feminine form is included.

§91.119 (b): Minimum Safe Altitudes over a Congested Area

The Waiver will allow officially registered balloons to operate over any congested area of a city, town or settlement and over any open-air assembly of persons at an altitude of no less than 500 feet AGL above the highest obstacle within a horizontal radius of 500 feet from the balloon within a 25 nautical mile radius of Albuquerque, New Mexico (ABQ) VORTAC, bounded by the 320° radial clockwise to the 190° radial.

Launching a balloon anywhere in, into, or over a congested area, or open-air assembly of persons, shall require the pilot to be in a continuous normal rate of climb, until an altitude of 500 feet AGL is attained.

It will also allow flight over, but no lower than 200 feet AGL within the green-striped boundary area on the official AIBF map.

It will also allow flight within the shaded area marked "Balloon Fiesta Park" on the map at altitudes not less than 75 feet above ground level (AGL) over buildings, hospitality tents or any open-air assembly of persons that are under direct control of the Holder of the Certificate of Waiver or Authorization.

The designated spectator area is within the area marked solid green on the official AIBF map and will be a minimum of 200 feet from any designated target. See Appendix A.

§91.119 (c): Minimum Safe Altitudes over Other than Congested Areas

The Waiver will allow officially registered balloons to descend to the surface over open water or sparsely populated areas but no closer than 200 feet from any non-participating person, vessel, vehicle or structure.

§91.130 (c) (1): Operations in Class C Airspace - Communications

In accordance with a written agreement (Memorandum of Understanding, MOU) with the ABQ ATCT, flight operations are authorized within the Class C Airspace designated for Albuquerque International Airport, ABQ (Sunport) without establishing communications prior to entering that airspace and maintaining communications while in that airspace. This deviation is valid only for the dates of Balloon Fiesta.

§91.130 (d): Operations in Class C Airspace – Equipment Requirements

In accordance with an agreement (MOU) with the ABQ ATCT, flight operations are authorized within the Class C Airspace designated for Albuquerque International Airport, ABQ (Sunport) without complying with the applicable equipment requirements specified in 14 CFR, § 91.215. This deviation is valid only for the dates of Balloon Fiesta.

§91.209 (a): Aircraft Lights

Flight operations are authorized, without aircraft lights, within the temporary flight restriction (TFR) area of the AIBF, at or below 8,000 feet MSL, for a period not to exceed 30 minutes prior to official sunrise. Ground operations (balloon glow) are authorized, without aircraft lights, within the temporary flight restriction (TFR) area of the AIBF and while the TFR is in effect.

Note: Dawn Patrol operations are not exempt from this regulation.

§91.215 (b) and (c) and 91.225: ATC Transponder and Altitude Reporting Equipment and Use

In accordance with an agreement (MOU) with the ABQ ATCT, participants in AIBF events are authorized to operate within Class C Airspace without being equipped with an ATC transponder, and without operating its ATC transponder. Under the same agreement participants are authorized to operate without Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B) Out equipment. This deviation is valid only for the dates of Balloon Fiesta.

The Assistant Balloonmeister will call ATCT 30 minutes prior to balloons entering class C airspace

II. RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROCEDURES

The Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, Inc. (AIBF) is a non-profit organization. AIBF coordinates field preparation and activities, approves the selection of the Balloonmeister and other key officials, and also approves information furnished to pilots and the rules governing competitive events.

A. Duties of AIBF Personnel:

1. **Event Director (Jennifer Garcia):** Is in overall operational charge of the AIBF flight operations and is responsible for effective management, and efficient and safe running of all flying Events. The Event Director coordinates all flight activities, coordinates with the FAA concerning flight activity during the event, works directly with AIBF's Executive Director and President to determine any need for cancellation, prepares the application for Waiver, rules and pilot information for approval by the AIBF Board of Directors and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).
2. **Pilot Administrator (Sarah Stultz):** Will assist the Event Director in all areas related to the effective management of all flying events and Glows and is responsible for the Pilot Headquarters, providing management of all Pilot/Crew social functions. Coordinates registration and pilot documentation plus FAA review. The Pilot Administrator organizes pilot rosters for Albuquerque Aloft, Government, Media, and VIP flights and coordinates pilot hotel rooms and pilot packs.
3. **Balloonmeister, (Henry Rosenbaum):** Is responsible for implementing and carrying out the operational decisions of the Event Director, coordinates all flight activities, coordinates with the Event Director during the event; briefs pilots on conditions for the day's flight, including restrictions that may apply; and recommends to close Balloon Fiesta Park for launches if unfavorable conditions for flight exist, is responsible for and directs all officials and is the point of contact for pilots and officials regarding problems, safety concerns, or competition related protests.
4. **Assistant Balloonmeister, (Tom Bueno):** Coordinates with and assists the Balloonmeister on all activities governed by Balloonmeister. Serves as the Balloonmeister for the Balloon Glow, Twilight Twinkle Glow TM and Special Shape

Glowdeo™. Advises the Balloonmeister of all matters pertaining to flight safety. Also point of contact with Albuquerque Tower regarding implementation and release of airspace restrictions.

5. **Chief Safety Official, (Mike Garcia):** Supervises Safety Officials, advises Balloonmeister on all matters pertaining to flight safety, monitors flight operations from a safety aspect, works to detect and correct potentially unsafe operations, and counsels Pilots who have violated safety and /or Balloon Fiesta procedures and serves as Assistant Balloonmeister during glows.
6. **Assistant Chief Safety Official, (Alex Jonard):** Coordinates with and assists the Chief of Safety regarding Safety Officials, advises Balloonmeister on all matters pertaining to flight safety, monitors flight operations from a safety aspect, works to detect and correct potentially unsafe operations and counsels Pilots who have violated safety and /or Balloon Fiesta procedures and serves as Assistant Balloonmeister during glows.
7. **Safety Officials:** Coordinate with and assist the Chief Safety Official on all activities mentioned above. Maintain an on-field presence during all AIBF flight operations. Coordinate with on-field law enforcement and emergency personnel in situations requiring their assistance.
8. **Chief Launch Official, (Michelle Healy):** Provides an interface for communications during launches to the Launch Team via direct communication with the Event Director, Balloonmeister, and Section Leaders. Selects, trains, and supervises Launch Officials/Launch Directors and Assistants in appropriate launching procedures, emphasizing safe operations; and coordinates all launch activities under the direction of the Balloonmeister and Chief Safety Official.
9. **Assistant Chief Launch Official, (Chris Padilla):** Assists the Chief Launch Official in the safe conduct of the launch and provides communications, collection and dissemination of critical information necessary during flight operations to Launch Directors in their respective sections.
10. **Section Launch Leaders, (Anna Brody, Jay Pape, Rachel Wills, David Crossland):** Assist Chief Launch Official in the safe conduct of the launch and provides communication, collection and dissemination of critical information necessary during flight operations to Launch Directors in their respective sections.
11. **Launch Directors (or Zebras):** Communicate with pilots prior to and during launch via verbal or accepted visual signals for preparation and direct launch activity. Clear balloons for take-off from Balloon Fiesta Park; direct crowd control during launches and special events; and advise Safety Officials of matters pertaining to balloon safety, including airworthiness and airmanship. Launch Directors may also assist when balloons land on the launch field.
12. **Chief Scoring Official, (Rita Brennan):** Responsible for all measurements and the scoring of competitive events and in concert with the Balloonmeister assess penalties for violations of Balloon Fiesta Rules and/or FAA Waiver. Selects, trains, and supervises scoring personnel with safety being the prime concern.
13. **Assistant Chief Scoring Official, (Steve Wilson):** Assists the Chief Scoring Official in

assuring all measured results are correct and determining whether rules have been violated by any Participant; serves as the senior Balloon Fiesta Official at off-field targets; and helps provide crowd control around target areas as required.

14. **Measurers: Collect** and record results of the official markers, provide crowd control around the target areas as required and help monitor rules infractions.
15. **Weather Team; (Don Day):** Acquires weather information from the National Weather Service and a variety of other sources; makes on-field weather observations; interprets data as it relates to balloon flight; and advises on weather issues as they relate to flight safety. Provides current continuous weather conditions to pilots and officials prior to, during flights and static displays (Glow). Briefs officials and pilots on current and forecasted weather conditions prior to and throughout each session.
16. **Landowner Relations Officials; (Nancy Wertz):** Maintain currency and accuracy of Official PZ map. Respond and report results of any landowner issues that may arise during Balloon Fiesta.
17. **Balloon Refueling Chief (Cyndi Montoya):** Communicates and coordinates with Propane Supplier and AIBF regarding any propane fueling procedures and violations.

B. Balloon Registration and Airworthiness Determination

1. Registered Balloons must meet certificate or airworthiness standards as follows:
 - a. The aircraft may be certificated in any category, including experimental, provided the requirements of 14 CFR Sections 91.7, 91.203, and 91.715 are met. FAA personnel may perform spot or ramp inspections. Prior to registration, pilots must assure AIBF that all required inspections are current.
 - b. Foreign registered balloons that do not possess an airworthiness certificate issued by the country of registration (as required by 14 CFR Section 91.203), must have a Special Flight Authorization issued by the FAA prior to registration at Balloon Fiesta.
 - c. While operating, the balloon must have within it all original documents required by the applicable regulations. No photocopies or pictures or phone scans.
2. Damage to balloon:
 - a. If a balloon is damaged during the Balloon Fiesta, it may be flown after damaged components are replaced or repaired in compliance with 14 CFR. However, an envelope, if in compliance with 14 CFR, may be replaced during the Balloon Fiesta only with the permission of the Event Director.
 - b. The pilot of a balloon that is damaged while in flight, to the extent of affecting its airworthiness (according to the applicable flight manual), must land at the first practicable opportunity. The damage must be reported to the Chief Safety Officer or his staff the same day of the incident. Also see Section 2, I, B, 7 a & b (Page 15).
 - c. Once the repair is completed, an aircraft logbook entry documenting the repair shall be presented to a Safety Official for review prior to flight operations.

3. AIBF shall maintain a roster containing the name, address, certificate number, and date of latest flight review of each registered pilot and the registration number, manufacturer, model, and date of aircraft annual inspection of each aircraft participating in the Balloon Fiesta. A copy of each list will be provided to the Albuquerque Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) prior to the Balloon Fiesta.
4. AIBF will provide facilities for FAA personnel to monitor operations during registration and all scheduled balloon events.

C. Pilots' Responsibilities

1. Each participating Pilot must hold a private or commercial balloon pilot certificate issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) or an equivalent rating issued by the country of the aircraft's registry; meet all currency requirements as outlined in the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) or the country of issuance of the airman certificate, as appropriate. Must be supported with original documents upon request.
2. Each pilot must provide evidence of the current Flight Review (14 CFR, § 61.56) and must show evidence of currency per §61.57 upon request.
3. Any balloon which displays a logo or message on the envelope, banner or basket may be considered a commercial balloon and is required to pay the appropriate fee to AIBF. Flights of such balloons and balloons receiving compensation from or paying compensation to AIBF are designated commercial operations and must be flown by a pilot with an LTA rating. Additionally, every pilot receiving compensation or conducting commercial operations must have the proper medical certification per §61.3 and §61.23 of Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations.
4. All pilots are required to sign a statement indicating that they have read and understand the provisions of the Waiver and the official Rules and Regulations prior to any flight.
5. No one other than the registered primary or additional pilot, is allowed to operate the balloon registered by the primary pilot.

D. Pilot/Flight Crew Briefing Responsibilities

1. Pilots must review and confirm complete understanding of the pre-recorded, event operations briefing and attend applicable pilot briefings held on the Balloon Fiesta Park-North launch field prior to acting as Pilot-In-Command (PIC).
2. Flight Crewmembers carried on board a balloon during the Balloon Fiesta must have been briefed by the pilot of the balloon. Each Flight Crewmember must sign the Flight Crewmember Acknowledgment & Release (Appendix G) supplied to the pilot by Balloon Fiesta. These forms will be collected and maintained by Balloon Fiesta. Each Flight Crewmember must attest that they have read and understand the conditions of the Waiver.
3. The total number of Flight Crewmembers is limited to the number allowed by the balloon manufacturer's flight manual and insurance coverage but in no case may it exceed **four (4) Flight Crewmembers** (pilot plus crewmembers), including the pilot (except for Official Ride Concessionaire) unless the pilot receives prior written authorization from AIBF. Penalty for infringement of this rule is up to 500 competition points and/or loss of up to one day's flying privileges/propane.

4. Before each flight all pilots are required to attend the flight briefing. Attendance is confirmed with an electronic scan of badge. See flight briefing details in Section 2, II, C (Page 17).

E. Entry Agreement / Statement of Responsibility

Each pilot must sign an entry agreement and statement of responsibility, Flight Crewmember Acknowledgement of Personal Responsibility & Release (Appendix G), acknowledging their responsibilities under 14 CFR as related to their participation in the Balloon Fiesta.

F. Event Documentation

All relevant registration files, pilot registration information, etc., will be maintained by AIBF at least 60 days after the event and will be made available to the FAA Monitor upon request.

III. GROUND OPERATIONS

A. Spectator (Guest) Areas

Balloon Fiesta guests will have unrestricted access to the launch field during inflation and launch procedures except as limited below.

B. Clear Areas

Clear areas are established at each target site. These areas are kept clear of guests and are frequently flagged. Safety or scoring officials will enforce target area boundaries to keep unauthorized persons out. In the Minimum Altitude Diagram (page 11), this is referred to as the “Controlled Target Area.”

C. Crowd Control Requirements

1. Each Pilot-In-Command (PIC) shall be responsible for crowd control in the immediate vicinity of his/her balloon during the inflation and launch. The PIC and crew are responsible for the protection of their property. The PIC shall also take measures to protect guests from any dangers associated with balloon operations. Launch Directors and other AIBF Officials will aid in crowd control if an emergency should occur.
2. An organized system for emergency life, safety and crowd control is coordinated through the central command center through the use of an Incident Command System compliant with the National Incident Management System. This system will marshal police, fire, medical, security, field officials and others as appropriate for the condition that exists. The central command center receives information on VHF radio and telephone and can transmit on VHF radio, telephone and the public address system.
3. Fire protection, emergency medical and law enforcement services on Balloon Fiesta Park will be provided. Two fire trucks and two rescue units with Emergency Medical Technicians are available on the Balloon Fiesta Park-North during launches, one stationed near each corner of the field. An additional fire truck will be stationed at the propane area during refueling operations. Also available are medical personnel from Lovelace Health System at the first aid area in the Public Safety building. City police, county sheriff’s deputies and private security personnel will be stationed at Balloon Fiesta Park-North during all AIBF sessions.

4. Clear Areas will be managed as follows:
 - a. For the Fly-In-Task events, a Target Area will be flagged to restrict guest access. Only AIBF Officials and other authorized personnel will be allowed in this area.
 - b. For the Ring Toss events, a Target Area with a minimum distance of 200 ft. from the Ring Toss poles will be flagged to restrict guest access. Only Balloon Fiesta Officials and other authorized personnel will be allowed in this area.
 - c. Tether operations, if conducted, will be in a designated area and flagged to restrict vehicle access. Safety Officials and/or Crewmembers will control and monitor guests' access.

D. Landowner Relations/Notification

1. Positive landowner relations are vital to the continuance of Balloon Fiesta. There is an ongoing effort by all involved persons prior to, during and after AIBF to maintain good landowner relations for local ballooning. Pilots must ensure permission has been obtained from the landowner or occupiers before driving onto, or launching from, any land which is enclosed or cultivated or apparently private or used for agricultural purposes. Penalty for infringement is up to 250 competition points and/or loss of up to one day's flying privileges/propane.
2. Landowners may display a white sheet or "X" on their property, this may indicate that the Landowner is giving pilot permission to land on the property.

IV. FLIGHT OPERATIONS

A. Area of Operations

1. Balloon Fiesta Park: The primary location for the manned free balloon events during the Balloon Fiesta is Balloon Fiesta Park. Balloon Fiesta Park is located between Paseo del Norte on the south, Roy (Tramway) Road on the north, Washington Street (South of Alameda), Jefferson Street (North of Alameda) on the east and by the Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control Authority channel on the west. Balloon Fiesta Park-North is located at Latitude N 35° 11.8' Longitude W 106°35.8' at an altitude of approximately 5073 ft. above sea level. The location is as indicated on the attached map (Appendix A).
2. Flight operations will occur within a 25 nautical mile radius of Albuquerque, New Mexico (ABQ) VORTAC, bounded by the 320° radial clockwise to the 190° radial from the surface to 9,400' MSL.

B. Hours of Operation and Waiver times are as follows (MDT):

October 2, 2026	0530 – 1200
October 3, 2026	0530 – 1200 and 1600 – 2000
October 4, 2026	0530 – 1200 and 1600 – 2000
October 5, 2026	0530 – 1200
October 6, 2026	0530 – 1200
October 7, 2026	0530 – 1200
October 8, 2026	0530 – 1200 and 1600 – 2000
October 9, 2026	0530 – 1200 and 1600 – 2000

October 10, 2026
October 11, 2026

0530 – 1200 and 1600 – 2000
0530 – 1200

C. Types of Operations

The Balloon Fiesta will consist of mass ascensions as well as single and multiple tasks called by the Balloonmeister after consultation with other event officials considering the conditions at hand and forecast to develop during the anticipated flight times. The tasks may include any of the following:

Non-Competitive

1. **Balloons (Albuquerque) Aloft:** Is primarily an “off-site” event that takes place on Friday, October 2, 2026, in which the balloons will launch or tether primarily from various elementary schools throughout Albuquerque and Rio Rancho. Balloons and pilots must be registered for this event. Participants shall abide by Balloon Fiesta rules, 14 CFR and the FAA Waiver. Weather and pilot briefing will be announced on KKOB 770 AM radio and VHF radio. (Page 29)
2. **Mass Ascensions:** Events where officially registered balloons launch from Balloon Fiesta Park-North (north of Alameda). Balloons are launched in waves beginning with the downwind rows, with approximately 275 balloons assigned per wave. Weekend mass ascensions are not competitive events. Mass ascensions conducted during the week may be competitive events with the pilots competing in JDG or MJDG events (See Competitive #1 & #5 – Pages 8-9). Special Shape mass ascensions may be conducted where only Special Shape balloons, non-competing balloons, official ride concessionaire balloons and others with special permission from the Event Director, launch from the Launch Field. A JDG or MJDG task may also be conducted in conjunction with these events. (Page 26)
3. **Twilight Twinkle™, Balloon Glow and Night Magic™ Glow:** Events where up to 350 balloons are inflated shortly before sunset and tethered (balloons are not allowed to leave the ground). After sunset, designated balloons may operate their burners on command to form different patterns or designs. Like the other AIBF flying events, guests are allowed access to the Balloon Fiesta Park-North during the event. (Page 27)
4. **Dawn Patrols:** Take place every morning during the Balloon Fiesta. Approximately ten to twenty registered Balloon Fiesta balloons launch from an area at or near Balloon Fiesta Park-North thirty to sixty minutes prior to sunrise. The balloons fly for one to one and one half hours and land after sunrise. Participants in these flights must adhere to all applicable Balloon Fiesta rules, 14 CFR, and the FAA Waiver. 14 CFR Section 91.209 (Aircraft Lights) has not been waived for Dawn Patrol. (Page 28)
5. **Special Shape Rodeo™/Glowdeo™:** Are events where approximately 100 Special Shape balloons tether and/or launch from Balloon Fiesta Park-North. Only balloons officially registered with Balloon Fiesta (or other aircraft with specific permission from the Event Director) will be allowed to launch from Balloon Fiesta Park-North. During the afternoon events, balloons not registered in this specific event may not operate within the restricted airspace described in Section 1, IV, G (Page 12). Like the other Balloon Fiesta events, guests are allowed access to Balloon Fiesta Park-North during these events. (Page 27)

Competitive

1. **Multiple Fiesta Declared Goals (MJDG):** Competitions are events where pilots fly to any one of the targets designated at pilot briefing and drop a marker as close as possible to a target located within the target area. Launches from outside of Balloon Fiesta Park must be at least .75 statute mile (1.21 km) from the center of Balloon Fiesta Park-North.
2. **Fly-In-Task (FIN):** Competitions are events where pilots launch from a site of their own choice, excluding Prohibited Zones (PZs) and Sensitive Areas (SAs) and no closer than .75 statute mile (1.21 km) from the center of Balloon Fiesta Park-North. They will fly to the designated target area at Balloon Fiesta Park-North where they will drop a marker on a target located within the target area. (Page 32)
3. **Gordon Bennett Memorial (GBM):** The Gordon Bennett Memorial, if conducted, will be announced at the Pilot Briefing. Competitors will attempt to drop their marker within a designated scoring area close as possible to the center of a set target. Scores will be measured from the center of the target. Any marker outside of the announced scoring area will not be scored. Shortest distance scored is best. (Page 34)
4. **Sid Cutter Memorial Task (SCMT):** This is dedicated to the memory of Balloon Fiesta founder Sid Cutter. Competitors will attempt to drop their marker within primary designated scoring areas close as possible to the center of a set target. The preferred scoring areas represent two islands, a beach and a boat (SS Cutter). Scores will be measured in these preferred scoring areas from the center of the target. Markers outside of the preferred scoring areas, but within 100 meters of the bow of the boat will be scored but the results will have a longer distance than those scored in the preferred scoring areas. Shortest distance (bow of boat) scored is best. See Section 2, VI, E, 8 (page 35) for diagram of scoring area.
5. **Fiesta Declared Goal (JDG):** The objective of the competition is to drop a marker on a designated target, the applicable launch area, a description of the scoring area as well as the position of the target will be announced at the pilot briefing. See Section 2, VI, F, 2 (Page 36) for a list of targets that might be used.
6. **Maximum Distance Single Drop (XSD):** Maximum Distance Single Drop competition will be announced at the Pilot Briefing. Competitors will drop their markers as far as possible in one scoring area. Only those markers inside the scoring areas will be scored. (Page 33)
7. **Minimum Distance Double Drop (MDD):** Minimum Distance Double Drop competition will be announced at the Pilot Briefing. Competitors will drop their markers as close together as possible in different but associated scoring areas (only those markers inside the scoring areas will be scored). (Page 33)
8. **Maximum Distance Double Drop (XDD):** Maximum Distance Double Drop competition will be announced at the Pilot Briefing. Competitors will drop their markers as far apart as possible in different but associated scoring areas. Only those markers inside the scoring areas will be scored. (Page 33)
9. **Ring Toss Competitions:** Are events where pilots launch from a site of their choice, excluding Prohibited Zones (PZs) and Sensitive Areas (SAs), and no closer than .75 statute

mile (1.21 km) from the center of Balloon Fiesta Park-North. They will fly to the target area at Balloon Fiesta Park-North and attempt to place rings over the top of poles approximately 30 ft. high. (Page 36)

Pilots are not required to compete in the designated flying events. However, if they choose to compete, they must launch with their designated flight wave unless given specific permission from the Balloonmeister to do otherwise. Pilots not flying in their designated event will not be allowed to compete in another event and must coordinate with an AIBF Official before launching from Balloon Fiesta Park.

Two tasks may be combined during a flying event. If that happens, details of each task will be provided during the flying events briefing.

D. Altitudes

The Waiver provides that registered balloons will be allowed to make approaches to targets and/or goals within the designated areas. Balloons making these approaches will be permitted to fly at altitudes as follows:

1. Over congested areas and other than during take-off and landing operations, at altitudes of not less than 500 feet AGL.
2. Within the striped boundary area indicated on the official AIBF map allow flight above, but not less than 200 feet AGL.
3. Within the shaded area marked “Balloon Fiesta Park” on the map at altitudes not less than 75 feet above ground level (AGL) over buildings, hospitality tents or any open-air assembly of persons. See Appendix A.
4. At any altitude (to the surface) within the flagged Target Area at Balloon Fiesta Park or other off-site targets. The Waiver to the surface is only applicable during competition events.
5. No pilot may initiate or maintain a fast ascent or descent in congested airspace. The maximum recommended rate of ascent and descent within congested airspace is 200 feet per minute (200 fpm) (1 m/s) for all operations including mass ascensions and competitive events.

In order to provide the highest possible level of safety for guests, the Safety Officials and Launch Directors will be positioned in the Target Area and around its perimeter to allow crowds to be shifted as necessary and to provide warning regarding any markers that may be dropped in the spectator areas. Announcements over the public address systems may also advise the guests of the possibilities of both low flying balloons over the area and of markers being dropped in guest areas.

The diagram illustrates the required altitudes for balloons over different areas. It is divided into two main horizontal sections: "Over non-congested areas" on the left and "Over congested areas" on the right, separated by a vertical line.

Over non-congested areas:

- A single balloon is shown with a diameter of 200'.
- The minimum altitude is 200'.
- Governing Rule: §91.119 (c).

Over congested areas:

- A large, shaded, dome-like structure represents the "Controlled Target Area".
- The diameter of this area is 75'.
- The minimum altitude is 500'.
- Below the target area, it is noted as "(none) surface".
- Governing Rule: 91.119 (b).

Distances:

- A horizontal double-headed arrow indicates a distance of "200' minimum 200'" between the non-congested and congested areas.
- A horizontal double-headed arrow below this indicates the width of the "Balloon Fiesta Park" area.

Overall Dimensions:

- A horizontal double-headed arrow at the bottom left indicates the width of the "Over non-congested areas".
- A horizontal double-headed arrow at the bottom right indicates the width of the "Over congested areas".

Caption: *Balloon Fiesta Park or other Target Area*

Flight operations will be conducted during the period from thirty minutes prior to published Sunrise to Sunset, with Visual Flight Rules (VFR) and weather conditions as specified in §91.155.

Launch operations for hot air balloons under the Waiver shall be under Visual Flight Rules with the following weather conditions:

- The Balloonmeister, after consultation with the Event Director and appropriate Balloon Fiesta Officials, shall cancel mass ascensions and competitive events already underway if weather conditions are outside the limits outlined above.

1. In accordance with the FAA issued Waiver, Daily Pilot briefings are mandatory and will be conducted at Balloon Fiesta Park-North beginning each morning at 0600 hours at the Pilot Briefing Tower. Balloon Glow, Night Magic™ and Twilight Twinkle Glow™ briefings will be at 1730 hours on October 3, 4 and October 10 in the Sid Cutter Pilots' Pavilion.

Special Shape Glowdeo™ briefings will be at 1730 hours on October 8 and October 9, in Sid Cutter Pilots' Pavilion.

2. A Public Address (PA) system installed at Balloon Fiesta Park-North, KKOBB Radio 770, a text messaging service and AIBF's VHF official weather frequency 119.475, plus the Balloonmeister frequency 456.8125 will provide advisories for pilots, crews and the public. These systems and AIBF Officials will be used to inform pilots of the status of their flight and updated weather information. Each pilot and crew will also be supplied with appropriate emergency phone numbers.
3. At Balloon Fiesta Park-North, routine communication with the pilots will be via Launch Directors (Zebras), radio station KKOBB AM 770, VHF radio and the public address system. Radio frequencies and telephone numbers for various weather information and the Albuquerque International Sunport (airport) are as follows:

	Frequency	Phone Number
ABQ International Tower	120.3	505 856-4936
Double Eagle Tower	120.15	505 352-5595
ATIS, ABQ International Sunport	118.0	505 856-4928
AWOS ABQ International Sunport	None	505 242-4044
Flight Service Station (weather brief)	122.55	800 992-7433
ATIS/AWOS Double Eagle	119.025	505 842-2009
Balloon Fiesta Weather	119.475	
Balloonmeister Monitor (UHF)	456.8125	

4. All participating pilots must have on board during all flights an operative VHF radio capable of receiving and transmitting on common aviation VHF communication frequencies.

The requirement to contact the Albuquerque International Sunport when flying within Class C airspace has been waived. The only time pilots are required to contact the Tower is if flying south of Central Avenue and cannot comply with the altitude requirements set out in Section 2, IV, B, 2 (a) and (b) (Page 24).

5. The requirement to contact the Double Eagle II Airport (AEG) Tower when flying within its Class D airspace is not waived. When in contact with the AEG Tower, pilots must follow their directions. If the pilot is not in communication with the AEG Tower and is within 1 nautical mile of Double Eagle Airport, the pilot must either land the balloon or climb above 7500 ft. MSL and fly over the airport.

G. Air Traffic Coordination

FAA NOTAM: A Notice to Air Missions (NOTAM) will be issued during the hours the Waiver is in effect to notify pilots of the Temporary Flight Restricted Area for the airspace within a four (4) nautical mile radius of Balloon Fiesta Park-North, from the surface to 8,000 MSL, in accordance with 14 CFR 91.145. This Temporary Flight Restricted Area is applicable to all aircraft (including balloons) that are not participating in that particular Balloon Fiesta event, unless given specific permission by the AIBF Event Director.

Section 2 Rules & Regulations

I. PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

A. Pilots & Crews

1. **Entry:** Pilots must be officially registered with the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta (AIBF) for all event(s) in which they are flying.
2. **PIC Responsibilities:** The Pilot-In-Command (PIC) is responsible for compliance with all of Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) and Balloon Fiesta rules. The PIC will brief all designated Flight Crewmembers prior to their flight and ensure that they understand their duties and the provisions of the Waiver (Appendix G). The PIC will ensure the Flight Crewmember Acknowledgment (Appendix G) is signed prior to the first flight of each crewmember. No flight or event is mandatory and all flights are made at the discretion of the PIC.
3. **Acknowledgement:** Pilots must know, understand and abide by all of 14 CFR, Balloon Fiesta rules and regulations, including any rules that are added or modified during the event and announced during any official pilot briefing. All pilots, aircraft owners and operators agree to have liability insurance coverage as required by AIBF in effect throughout the event, including automobile insurance covering any vehicle driven onto the Balloon Fiesta Launch Field.
4. **Paid Passengers:** No balloon or pilot may participate in any Balloon Fiesta event while carrying passengers for hire or compensation, nor may they operate rides for hire in Balloon Fiesta's airspace unless they are contracted to do so with AIBF or the AIBF Balloon Ride Concessionaire and operate on its behalf. Violation of this section may result in expulsion from this and/or future Balloon Fiesta events.
5. **Release of Liability:** The pilot and crew (Participants), by entering the Balloon Fiesta, agree that the organizers and sponsors of this event, competition officials, officers, trustees, agents and/or members of these entities are providing the Participant with the facilities and means for participation in this event, and in no way do they supersede the responsibility of the pilot in command as stated in 14 CFR, or otherwise.

The Participant releases the organizers and sponsors of this event, competition officials, officers, trustees, agents and/or members of these entities, as well as owners or occupiers of landing sites, from liability arising in any way from the balloon flight or activity in which the Participant participates as a pilot or crewmember.
6. **Liability to Third Parties:** By entering the Balloon Fiesta, a Participant assumes all liability for injury, loss or damage to third parties or their property caused or alleged to be caused, in whole or in part, by him and/or his crew.
7. **Safety:** All meteorological reports, forecasts, and other safety or navigational information are provided in good faith for the guidance of participants. AIBF assumes no responsibility for the completeness or accuracy of such information. It is the pilot's decision whether to

rely on that information or acquire additional information pursuant to 14 CFR Section 91.103.

8. **Launch Directors:** Officials will be appointed to regulate the inflation and launching of balloons at Balloon Fiesta Park. However, nothing shall diminish the responsibility of each pilot under this section.
9. **Recall:** Flight cancellation and other critical safety information will be communicated through AIBF radio frequencies, or texts through the Event Texting system.
10. **Use of Drugs or Alcohol:** Pilots may not inflate, fly, tether or static-display an aircraft within eight (8) hours of consuming alcohol, or if the pilot is otherwise under the influence of alcohol or is using any drug or medication that affects the pilot's faculties in any way contrary to safety.
11. **Responsibility:** Each pilot has full and complete authority over the balloon and is responsible for all decisions to be made associated with the balloon on the ground and in the air. Each pilot must ensure that his crew, his equipment, and his own level of skill and experience are suitable for the conditions in his own judgment. A pilot is responsible for all the actions of his crew during the event.
12. **Conduct:** Pilots and their crews are required to behave in a sportsmanlike manner and to comply with the directions of the Balloon Fiesta Event Officials. Profanity or unsportsmanlike conduct directed at any Official or event Navigator (volunteer) will be grounds for expulsion of the pilot from this event and/or future Balloon Fiesta events. Crewmembers are required to adhere to safe driving practices and abide to all local & state regulations as well as specific instructions from Balloon Fiesta Officials. Penalty up to 250 competition points and/or loss of up to one day's flying privileges/propane.

B. Balloons

1. Must be registered with the Balloon Fiesta for the events in which they are participating.
2. Balloons larger than 105,900 cubic feet (2998 m³) and pilots and crews contracted to the official ride concessionaire, are not eligible to compete in Balloon Fiesta competitive events. Non-competing balloons are required to remain clear of the target areas.
3. Pilots must fly the balloon in which they registered and, in the event, and flight for which they are scheduled. If the pilot is registered in multiple balloons, once he has achieved a result in a particular balloon, he may not compete in another balloon without the specific written permission of the Event Director. Pilots may be disqualified if the size of the balloon actually flown is different than what is listed in the pilot's application.
4. Must display the official 2026 AIBF gondola banner during all flight operations while participating in AIBF events. Penalty for violation up to 200 competition points and/or loss of up to one day's flying privileges/propane.
5. Balloons, including balloon baskets may not contain any advertising or messaging unless that advertising or message is disclosed to AIBF in writing prior to it being displayed and the applicable fee being paid to AIBF.

6. **Airworthiness:** The organizers and/or officials are authorized to visually inspect and/or reject any aerostat which in their opinion is not of a reasonable standard of airworthiness. See Section 1, II, B, 1 (Page 4).
7. **Damage to Balloon:** Also see Section 1, II, B, 2 (Page 4).
 - a. The pilot of a balloon that is damaged while in flight, to the extent of affecting its airworthiness who continues to participate in a competitive task or flight, may receive a penalty up to 500 competition points and/or loss of up to one day's flying privileges/propane.
 - b. Pilot must report an accident or incident to the AIBF Chief of Safety, via the self-report form, on the same day of the accident/incident. Failure to report to the FAA or NTSB in a timely manner may result in a penalty of up to 500 competition points and/or loss of up to one day's flying privileges/propane, or greater penalty as determined in the discretion of AIBF.
8. **Retrieve Vehicles:** Retrieval Crew shall not be within any Target Area or within 100 meter radius of an offsite target. Retrieval vehicles shall not be parked within 100 meters of an offsite target. Penalty for infringement up to 250 task points and/or loss of up to one day's flying privileges/propane. Retrieve Vehicles must display AIBF 2026 vehicle sticker during all flight operations, launch and recovery. Penalty for violation up to 200 competition points and/or loss of up to one day's flying privileges/propane.

C. Rides for Hire

No balloon or pilot may participate in any AIBF event while carrying passengers for hire or compensation, nor may they operate a ride for hire in AIBF's airspace unless they are contracted to do so with AIBF or the AIBF Balloon Ride Concessionaire and operate on its behalf. Violation of this section may result in expulsion from this and/or future AIBF events.

D. Penalties for Violations

1. AIBF Rules and General Safety

- a. In addition to the penalties listed for violating competitive event rules, penalties exist for violating safety and/or other AIBF rules. The penalties may include a conference at the Pilot Briefing Tower or elsewhere at Balloon Fiesta Park at which the pilot will be counseled by a Safety Official on AIBF rules and safety or by an FAA representative on 14 CFR and safety. Safety and/or rules violations may result in a loss of competition points, losing one or more days of propane and/or flying privileges, and/or expulsion from this and/or future AIBF events.
- b. The FAA Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) will also investigate non-compliance with Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) and the Waiver issued for the Balloon Fiesta, in addition to accidents and incidents occurring in conjunction with the event.
- c. A pilot who is called to the Pilot Briefing Tower because of a safety or rule infraction will not be allowed to refuel at AIBF's fueling area until he has spoken with a Safety Official about the infraction. In addition, competition points received in that flight will be reduced as appropriate for any rule violations. Additional sanctions may be imposed if a pilot repeatedly refuses to speak with a Safety Official about an infraction. These

may include losing one or more days of flying privileges and propane and/or expulsion from this and/or future AIBF events.

- d. Please remember that the majority of the people who make this event possible are volunteers. Most flight operations team members are pilots and crew who give up their time to enable Participants to fly. Cooperation with Officials will make this a better event. If a Participant has an issue or problem with any aspect of the AIBF flight operations, do not abuse the Officials, but calmly discuss the problem with one of them. The Officials are readily identified by their official uniforms and are available to discuss any matter. Verbal or physical abuse toward any Official may result in the expulsion of the pilot from this and/or future AIBF events.
- e. A pilot violating any rule for which a penalty is not specified in the rules may be penalized by deduction of points, loss of flying privileges/propane or by disqualification from this and/or future AIBF events.
- f. AIBF RESERVES THE RIGHT TO PREVENT PARTICIPANTS FROM TAKING PART IN ANY EVENT WHENEVER PERSONAL CONDUCT OR UNSAFE FLIGHTS MAKE THEM UNDESIRABLE TO AIBF, PARTICIPANTS AND/OR GUESTS.

2. Penalty Points

- a. There are two kinds of point penalties: task points and competition points.
- b. Task point penalties are subtracted from a competitor's task score, which cannot be reduced below zero (0). Competition point penalties are also subtracted from a competitor's task score and may result in a negative score, which will be set against his total score in the event.

3. Serious Infringements, Unsporting Behavior

- a. Serious infringements include dangerous or hazardous actions or repetitions of lesser infringements will be penalized according to the appropriate rule.
- b. Cheating or unsporting behavior, including deliberate attempts to deceive or mislead officials, willful interference with other Participants, falsification of documents, use of forbidden equipment or prohibited drugs or repeated serious infringements of rules shall result in disqualification from the event, or possible expulsion from the Balloon Fiesta.

4. Distance Infringements

- a. Where the individual launch point infringes a distance limit, the competitor will be penalized up to 500 task points.
- b. Unless required for safety reasons and with permission of an Official, competitors landing in a Scoring Area will not achieve a result in the related task.
- c. Enforcement of a distance infringement penalty will not cause a competitor to achieve a score less than he would have received if he had not achieved a result.

5. Prohibited Zone Infringement

A Participant violating a Prohibited Zone (PZ) or Sensitive Area (SA) that is in force will

be penalized up to 1000 competition points and/or loss of up to one day's flying privileges/propane.

6. Minimum Altitude Violations

Violations of minimum altitudes will result in a penalty up to 500 competition points and/or loss of up to one day's flying privileges/propane.

7. 14 CFR

It is the responsibility of Participants to follow the requirements of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR) and Event Waiver. In all cases involving violations of air traffic rules and air safety, the Event Director or his delegated official will act in consultation with the FAA Monitor to determine the appropriate penalty.

II. FLIGHT OPERATIONS

Compliance with the Waiver, Special Provisions and the AIBF Pilots Rules and Regulations is MANDATORY.

A. Waiver

1. Details of 14 CFR sections waived are contained in Section 1, I of this Manual.
2. The minimum altitudes of 14 CFR §91.119 (b) and (c) have been reduced as indicated in Section 1, IV, D (Page 10) of this Manual except non-competing balloons may not fly lower than 75 ft. AGL in any applicable Target Area for each flight unless landing at Balloon Fiesta Park.
3. Violations of minimum altitudes will result in a penalty up to 500 competition points and/or loss of up to one day's flying privileges/propane.

B. Unscheduled special flights from Balloon Fiesta Park require permission from the Event Director.

C. Briefings

1. **General Briefing:** In accordance with the FAA issued Waiver each pilot flying in Balloon Fiesta must view the event operations briefing video and the applicable live pilot briefings as a condition of registration. The video briefing video of Balloon Fiesta information will be available for reviewing online. All pilots may view the video briefing from September 5 through September 20 All pilots who view the video briefing online and successfully complete the short test at its conclusion, will not be required to view it again during Pilot Registration and may proceed directly to the Registration processing line. The video briefing will also be shown every hour, as needed, on October 1 beginning at 1000 and ending at 1800 and October 2 beginning at 1000 and ending at 1600. It will also be available for viewing on Saturday, October 3 at 0445. Special Shape Rodeo™ participants only will be able to view the video at the above times and Wednesday, October 7 at 1030 hours and Thursday, October 8 at 0445 hours. This video briefing will review the Waiver and other pertinent information to help ensure safe conduct during Balloon Fiesta.

2. **Flight Briefing:** Attendance at the applicable daily pilot briefings for the events in which you are participating are mandatory and will be conducted at Balloon Fiesta Park-North as follows:
 - a. Beginning each morning at 0600 hours at the Pilot Briefing Tower.
 - b. Dawn Patrol pilot briefings at 0530 hours at the following location: L-3
 - c. Krispy Kreme Morning Glow pilot briefings at 0530 hours (Saturdays, Sundays and Wednesday) at M-3
 - d. Balloon Glow, Night Magic™ and Twilight Twinkle Glow™ briefings will be at 1730 hours on October 3, 4 and October 10 in the Sid Cutter Pilots' Pavilion.
 - e. Special Shape Glowdeo™ briefings will be at 1730 hours on October 8 and October 9 in the Sid Cutter Pilots Pavilion

D. Weather Information

Pilot weather information will be available from numerous sources and will be updated throughout the flight period. **It's important that pilots note that weather conditions at Balloon Fiesta Park may vary greatly from KABQ and KAEG due to the unique topographical attributes of each location.** Sources of weather include the following:

1. Flight Service Station reports from KABQ and KAEG. Also see Section 1, IV, F, 3 (Page 12).
2. Current and forecast weather developed by AIBF professional meteorologists for Balloon Fiesta Park.
3. Current real time surface wind information from AIBF's remote weather stations.
4. Theodolite pibal and radar wind profiler readings run from Balloon Fiesta Park.

The timetable and broadcast method of weather information is as follows:

Time	Location	Weather Information
0445	Sid Cutter Pavilion	Flight service data from KABQ and KAEG
0545	Sid Cutter Pavilion and Briefing Tower	Flight service data from KABQ and KAEG
0600	Briefing Tower	Complete Balloon Fiesta Park weather briefing from AIBF meteorology team
0615	Briefing Tower	Updated weather report
0645/0930	AIBF Radio, Specialized Apps, and Text Messages	Balloon Fiesta briefing, FSS reports, ground weather stations, theodolite pibals and radar wind profiler

E. Pilot in Command (PIC):

1. The PIC will brief all Flight Crewmembers as to their duties and the provisions of the Waiver. The PIC will ensure Flight Crewmembers sign the Flight Crewmember Acknowledgment prior to the first flight of each Flight Crewmember during the Balloon

Fiesta. The PIC must return the Flight Crewmember Acknowledgment to Balloon Fiesta staff at propane refueling.

2. With the exception of AIBF registered commercial ride balloons, the total number of Flight Crewmembers is limited to the number allowed by the balloon manufacturer's flight manual and insurance coverage but may not exceed **4 flight crewmembers**, including the pilot unless the pilot has received prior written authorization from the Event Director. Permission granted will be designated by a plus (+) on their official basket banner. Penalty for infringement of this rule is up to 500 competition points and/or loss of up to one day's flying privileges/propane.
3. The PIC shall not allow any items to be thrown from the balloon unless the item is an official marker used for a competitive event, and the PIC is certain it will land in the Target Area or if it is shaving cream or similar lightweight material for navigational purposes. Penalty is up to 100 task points and/or loss of up to one day's flying privileges/propane.

F. Flying Conditions

Albuquerque is approximately 5,000 ft. (1600 m) above sea level. Pilots should be aware of the effects this altitude has on balloon performance, in particular, increased response times and reduced lifting capacity. The Sandia Mountains are 10,678 ft. (3255 m) above sea level. Winds follow classic mountain-valley patterns. The mountains can generate strong vertical and rotor winds that constitute a serious hazard to balloons.

G. Launch

1. Pilots must ensure permission has been obtained from the landowner or occupiers before driving onto, or launching from, any land which is enclosed or cultivated or apparently private or used for agricultural purposes. Penalty for infringement is up to 250 task points and/or loss of up to one day's flying privileges/propane.
2. Your launch site at Balloon Fiesta Park has been assigned and is indicated on your pilot badge. When launching from the Park, you must launch from your site and with your assigned flight, unless you receive specific permission from the Balloonmeister or his designated official to do otherwise. However, your Launch Director may grant authorization for you to move to an adjacent launch site to inflate and/or launch.
3. Launch from Balloon Fiesta Park only with the permission of a Launch Director (Zebra). Launching without Launch Director permission may result in a penalty up to 500 competition points and/or loss of up to one day's flying privileges/propane.
4. A pilot losing control of his balloon shall deflate immediately or take other appropriate action.
5. There are up to four balloons assigned to each launch site. Please be cooperative.
6. Only the vehicle transporting the balloon designated with adhesive number affixed to windshield of the chase vehicle, supplied with the basket banner, is allowed on the Launch Field during inflations. Penalty for infringement may be up to 250 task points and/or loss of up to one day's flying privileges/propane.

7. Launch Directors' **Hand Signals:**
 - a. **THUMBS UP:** Cleared for IMMEDIATE LIFT-OFF.
 - b. **THUMBS DOWN:** HOLD exactly where you are.
 - c. **WALK THE BALLOON:** If necessary and with pilot acceptance, the crew will guide the balloon to the spot instructed by the Launch Director. The balloon is to be buoyant with no lift provided by the crew.
8. The 2026 AIBF Launch Schedule and Pilot Briefing announcements will indicate the launch wave to which you are assigned. The last digit in your banner determines your launch wave (Example: Banner number 612 (Even) indicates that you launch with other EVEN banner balloons). See Appendix B for the 2026 AIBF Launch Schedule. Please time your operations so as to be ready and buoyant at launch time. Work closely with the Launch Director.
9. All inflator fans must have appropriate safety cages. Pilots must ensure the safe operation of the fan and prevent non 'crewmembers' access to it. Whenever non-crewmembers are present at the inflator, a crewmember should monitor the inflator fan operation during inflations at Balloon Fiesta Park.
10. Inflation tanks not properly secured to the basket will not be allowed.
11. In order to assist in the launch of all balloons on Balloon Fiesta Park, please ascend at a rate that allows you to clear the launch field or ascend to 500 ft. AGL in a timely manner and merge with the balloons launched ahead of you. If you "box" back over the field during the launch process, you must cross at a minimum altitude of 500 ft. AGL, so that you do not interfere with the balloons being launched in later waves. Cooperation will allow the Launch Directors to get you and all of your fellow pilots airborne as soon as possible. Flying back over the Launch Field while balloons are launching at altitudes less than 500 feet AGL will incur up to a 250 task penalty and/or loss of up to one day's flying privileges/propane.
12. Proper use of a quick-release tie-off (launch restraint system) for all inflations on Balloon Fiesta Park is required and is recommended for off-field individual launch areas. Tie-off only to vehicle frame or properly installed hitch. Tie-off attachment lines, should not exceed 20 feet and must not be tied off to, or routed under, a trailer. Penalty for infringement is up to 250 task points and/or loss of up to one day's flying privileges/propane.

H. Ascents and Descents

1. No pilot may initiate or maintain a fast ascent or descent in congested airspace. The maximum recommended rate of ascent and descent within congested airspace is 200 fpm (1 m/s) for all operations including Mass Ascensions and competitive events.
2. Careless or unnecessarily high rates of ascent or descent will result in a penalty up to 500 competition points and/or loss of one day's flying privileges/propane. Repeated offenses may result in expulsion.

I. Balloon Collision

1. When two balloons are converging in flight, both Participants are responsible to avoid collision. The overtaking balloon shall give way and take appropriate action.

2. Participants shall not initiate or maintain a vertical speed exceeding 200 feet per minute (1 m/s) unless they are certain that no balloon is in their flight path.
3. Pilots causing a collision will be penalized by up to 1000 competition points and/or loss of up to one day's flying privileges/propane. A repeated offense will be penalized by disqualification from the event and/or up to expulsion from the event.
4. Envelope to envelope contact in approximate level flight will generally not be penalized.

J. Dangerous Flying

Dangerous flying (e.g. any flying creating an unnecessary risk to other balloons or people on the ground), not necessarily causing a collision, will be penalized up to 1000 competition points and/or loss of up to one day's flying privileges/propane.

K. Clearing Scoring Area

A competitor who has dropped his marker shall clear the vicinity of the target as quickly and safely as reasonably possible. Failure to do so may result in a penalty up to 500 task points.

L. Behavior

Participants are required to fly with proper consideration for persons and livestock on the ground and to follow good landowner relations etiquette and the code of conduct. Inconsiderate behavior by Participants or crewmembers may be penalized up to 1000 competition points and/or loss of up to one day's flying privileges/propane and/or up to expulsion from the event.

M. Collision/Powerline

A Participant whose balloon is in collision with power or telephone lines or their supports at any time between inflation and completion of final landing will be penalized up to 500 competition points and /or loss of up to one day's flying privileges/propane. Collisions may additionally be penalized under the rule for dangerous flying. Participants must also give notice of such collision to the Chief Safety Official or a Safety Official on the same day of the collision.

N. Flight Operations During Competitions

Any balloon not participating in the flight competitions is to remain clear of all the Scoring Areas (unless landing at Balloon Fiesta Park-North). Failure to do so may result in loss of one day's flying privileges/propane.

O. Landings

Choose landing areas carefully considering PZs and obtain landowner permission as appropriate. Pilots and crew shall exercise care to prevent damage to property and livestock. Pilots bear sole responsibility for any damage caused to the property of any landowner and shall repair or replace any property damaged by a landing or attempted landing.

1. Take-off or landing in a red or yellow PZ will result in a penalty of up to 1000 competition points and/or loss of up to one day's flying privileges/propane. See Section 2, IV, A (Page 24).
2. Altitude violations of any red PZ will result in a penalty up to 500 competition points and/or

loss of up to one day's flying privileges/propane.

The following must be adhered to for landings at Balloon Fiesta Park:

3. Landings at Balloon Fiesta Park-South (south of Alameda) are permitted outside the scoring area only if the landing can be done safely without endangering persons or property on the ground.
4. Landing on Balloon Fiesta Park during non-competition days is allowed with permission from the Balloonmeister or other Official. On Competition days landings are permitted in the following locations. See appendix D (page 47)
 - a. In Row H and South to Corporate Village
 - b. In Row Q and North to Cutter Rd
 - c. East of Row 3-4 flagging *only with permission of an AIBF Official*
 - d. West of Row 10 flagging if landing can be done without blocking West Wind Drive

Landings at Balloon Fiesta Park are subject to the following conditions:

- e. The landing can be done safely without endangering persons or property on the ground.
- f. **All scheduled flights have been launched.**
- g. The landing area is clear of spectators, vehicles or any other obstacles.
- h. Landing during competitive events shall not interfere with others' scoring opportunities. Penalty for infringement of this rule is up to 500 competition points and/or loss of up to one day's flying privileges/propane. Also see Section 2, VI, D, 5 (a) (Page 32).
- i. Chase Crews may assist landings during competition within the flagged area with permission from an AIBF Official but must remain outside the Target area (Key Grab Road to Baggie Drop Road). Vehicles may enter the flagging area with approval from an AIBF Official when the balloon is packed and ready to load.
- j. In the event of an emergency, land on Balloon Fiesta Park-North as safely as possible with due consideration for people, other balloons or obstacles that may be present. If landing occurs during competition within the Target Area, the balloon must be immediately deflated and must not be moved without approval from an AIBF Official.

P. Ground Contact

1. **Ground Contact 1:** After passing over the boundary of any launch area, no part of the balloon or anything attached to it may make solid contact with the ground or water surface or anything resting on or attached to the ground, until the last task has been completed. Penalty for each solid contact is up to 200 task points. *Note 1: A contact is solid if it is prolonged or*

results in a change of motion of the basket and will be penalized. Note 2: incidental contact with grass or leaves will not be penalized

2. **Ground Contact 2:** No part of the balloon or anything attached to it may make solid contact with the ground or water surface or anything resting on or attached to the ground (marker excepted) within the scoring area. Penalty for each solid contact is up to 500 task points. *Note1: A contact is solid if prolonged or results in a change of motion of the basket or the envelope. Note2: Incidental contact with grass or leaves will not be penalized.*

(Note: Participants will not be penalized under both rules for any single contact.)

Q. Permission to Retrieve

Participants must ensure that permission has been obtained from the landowner or occupier before driving onto any land that is enclosed or cultivated or apparently private or used for agricultural purpose. Penalty is up to 250 task points and/or loss of up to one day's flying privileges/propane.

III. FIELD OPERATIONS

- A. Crowd Control:** See Section 1, III, C, 1 (Page 6) for information and responsibilities.
- B. Chase Crews:** Inquiries regarding the availability of crewmembers may be made at Registration or the Chase Crew facility on Balloon Fiesta Park during the Balloon Fiesta. No representation of the suitability or experience of these crewmembers is made by AIBF. It is the pilot's responsibility to obtain the signature of every Flight Crewmember on a Flight Crewmember Acknowledgment prior to that Flight Crewmember's flight.
- C. No Drive Zone:** No driving or parking is allowed on Main Street (Concession Concourse). Repeated violation of this will result in loss of flying privileges/propane.
- D. Vehicle Security:** All vehicles parked at Balloon Fiesta Park should be locked, with the windows fully secured.
- E. Propane Venting:** NEVER vent raw propane on Balloon Fiesta Park! Penalty for infringement may be up to 500 task points and/or loss of up to one day's flying privileges/propane.
- F. Hydrogen Tanks for PIBALs:** No hydrogen tanks are allowed at Balloon Fiesta Park.
- G. Tether operations:** If conducted, will be in a designated area and flagged to restrict vehicle access. Safety Officials and/or Launch Directors will monitor tether operations and Chase Crews will control and monitor guest access. A minimum of a three-point, vehicle tie-off is required.
- H. Unauthorized and/or Unattended Vehicles**
 1. Unauthorized vehicles on the Balloon Fiesta Launch Field create unnecessary congestion and will be towed at owner's expense. During balloon launches from Balloon Fiesta Park, unattended vehicles, whether or not authorized to be on the launch sites, may be towed at owner's expense if the vehicle is deemed by Balloon Fiesta officials to pose a hazard to balloons, guests or field operations. This includes balloon trailers and recreational vehicles. Violation of this rule may result in the loss of flying privileges/propane.

2. Only the authorized chase vehicle may be on the Launch Field East of Pilots' Parkway. Parking your excess chase vehicle (s) anywhere else will result in towing and possible loss of flying privileges/propane.

I. Balloon Fiesta Park Entry and Exit: No vehicle may enter or exit the Launch Field from Balloon Fiesta Parkway or Balloon Museum Drive.

IV. FLIGHT RESTRICTIONS

No flights are allowed within Balloon Fiesta's airspace (TFR) unless you and your balloon are registered in that specific event, including Albuquerque Aloft, Twilight Twinkle Glow™, Balloon Glow, Special Shape Glowdeo™ and Night Magic™ Glow. **VIOLATION OF THIS RULE MAY RESULT IN YOUR INTERROGATION BY VARIOUS AGENCIES OF HOMELAND SECURITY.**

Official maps will be provided to pilots with information on Prohibited Zones (PZs) and Sensitive Areas (SAs) current up to the printing deadline. Updated information will be provided in the video briefing and daily pilot briefings. Pilots are responsible for obtaining this information and updating their official maps.

PZs AND SAs ON THE OFFICIAL MAP ARE DESIGNATED BY AIBF. *They are in addition to 14 CFR and not a substitute for 14 CFR. Pilots must follow AIBF rules regarding PZs and SAs, even if a land owner in a PZ or SA offers their property for landing or launch.*

Prohibited Zones (PZs) are areas where, in the interest of safety or landowner relations, balloons may not be launched or landed and in some circumstances shall not fly at lower than a specified altitude. These are indicated on the official map in YELLOW and RED with the location and hazard description in the legend of the map. A YELLOW PZ is a restricted area where no launches or landings are permitted. A RED PZ will also include a minimum allowable altitude. If an emergency situation dictates a landing in a PZ, use caution in the landing and tact in dealing with the landowner. Penalty for infringement of this rule is up to 1000 competition points and/or loss of up to one day's flying privileges/propane. Repeated violations may result in up to expulsion from the event.

Sensitive Areas (SAs) are areas where you may land as long as you exercise caution to avoid property damage and follow correct retrieval procedures. You may not launch from a Sensitive Area. These are indicated on the official map in PURPLE with location, hazard description and special retrieval procedures found in the Prohibited Zones Aerial Images manual. If an emergency situation dictates a landing in a SA, use caution in the landing and tact in dealing with the landowner.

1. **Double Eagle Airport (KAEG)** is located approximately 10 nautical miles west southwest of Balloon Fiesta Park. If you are not in radio communication with the Double Eagle Tower while in their airspace, you must climb to 7500 ft. MSL and fly over the airport or land prior to reaching the airport.

If the chase crew requires access onto Double Eagle Airport please contact Double Eagle Tower at (505) 352-5595, 352-5596 or 352-5597 for an escort.

2. **Albuquerque International Sunport (KABQ)** is located approximately 10 nautical miles south of Balloon Fiesta Park. The Albuquerque International Sunport Traffic Control Tower

has agreed to allow a deviation from the requirement to establish two-way radio communications prior to entering the Class C airspace. If a landing can be made prior to Central Avenue, radio contact with Air Traffic Control Tower is not required.

Please remember that you must monitor the tower frequency (120.3) while flying in Class C airspace.

- a. Flights south of I-40 and east of I-25 (as indicated in gray on the map):

If you do not land north of Central Avenue you *must* contact Air Traffic Control Tower on 120.3 MHz.

If circumstances require you to fly over Albuquerque International Sunport and you are unable to contact the Air Traffic Control Tower, you *shall climb* to 8,000 ft. (2,439 m) MSL and cross over the airport area. Descent below 8,000 ft. (2,439 m) MSL may begin when balloon crosses the southern airport boundary fence.

- b. Flights south of I-40 and west of I-25 (as indicated in light blue on the map):
If you do not land prior to Central Avenue you *must* contact the Air Traffic Control Tower on 120.3 MHz.

If you do not land north of Central Ave. and are unable to contact Air Traffic Control Tower you must descend to 6,000 ft. (1,829 m) MSL and remain at or below 6,000 ft. (1,829 m), until reaching the area where I-25 curves west and crosses the Rio Grande, where you can then ascend above the 6,000 ft. requirement if necessary. You may also land at any time provided you are not violating any PZ restrictions.

- c. If you must land on the Albuquerque International Sunport (KABQ) complex, do so expeditiously and, if possible, DO NOT move the balloon equipment until airport security or military police arrive.
- d. If the chase crew requires access to Albuquerque International Sunport (KABQ) property:

Proceed to the intersection of Girard Blvd and Gibson Blvd, drive south on Girard Blvd for four-tenths (.4) of a mile; make a left turn and continue to parallel the perimeter fence on the left. Continue to the gate marked F-15. On the left side of the gate/road is a pole with a phone box on it. Follow the instructions listed on the phone. Have the crewmember inform the person who answers that they are at Gate 16 to retrieve their balloon and request they have Ops 60 meet them at the gate. An Operations Officer or a Police Officer will escort the chase crew as required. Chase crews attempting to enter the airport at any other gate must still make contact with the Operations Officer for escort (call 505-328-8410). Chase crews are not allowed inside the airport fence line without an escort. **Note:** The gate to which the entry instructions are given is currently not staffed. Escorts are limited and delays in retrieval should be expected. Be sure to notify the airport in advance that you are coming if possible. *All vehicles requiring access to the Albuquerque International Sunport (airport) will be searched and both driver's and passengers' identification will be verified.* If extra propane tanks are carried in the chase vehicle they will not be allowed on the Sunport complex.

3. **Kirtland Air Force Base (KAFB)** is directly east of and adjacent to the Albuquerque International Sunport. If the balloon lands on KAFB property:
 - a. **Pilots:** Avoid landing on KAFB property except in emergency situations or for safety of flight reasons. If landing at KAFB is the only alternative, land as soon as it is safe.
 - b. **Pilot and crewmember(s):** Remain with the balloon until base officials arrive with the chase crew, and remain with official KAFB escorts until departure from the base. At no point are you free to leave until KAFB Police release you. (**Note:** To ensure the safety and security of the installation, KAFB officials have the authority to detain and interview pilot and crew for potential criminal violations related to Title 18, United States Code, Section 1382.) In addition, KAFB has the right to pursue claims for damages resulting from unauthorized landing on KAFB.
 - c. **Chase crews:** Proceed to the KAFB gate with a Visitor Control Center (located at Truman. Check-in at the visitor center and provide the names and IDs of all personnel desiring entry to the base. Base officials will provide escort for the entire chase crew. Remain with the escort until returned to the gate for exit from the base. (**Note:** Calling the Law Enforcement Desk at (505) 846-7913 or (505) 846-7926 may help expedite chase crew's entry onto the base.)
4. **Sandia Pueblo & Isleta Pueblo. FINAL LANDINGS ONLY (NO HOPS)** are allowed in the PURPLE areas of Sandia Pueblo (*otherwise 200' AGL*). If the chase crew needs to enter **Sandia Pueblo** (north of Albuquerque) or **Isleta Pueblo** (South of Albuquerque):
 - a. Before entering Sandia Pueblo, locate the escort station on the map. If no escort is present, call the Sandia Police Dispatch at (505) 798-7401. Before entering Isleta Pueblo, contact the Isleta Pueblo Substation at (505) 869-3030. Follow the directions of the escort that will be provided.
 - b. *Do not open any gates without an escort. Do not take any alcohol on Pueblo land. Do not take photos in or of the villages. Do not operate drones. Use landing report forms provided in pilot pack.*
 - c. *The Pueblo wants to control traffic and ensure safety within Pueblo property. With this in mind, landings on paved roads and adjacent property is prohibited. Do not land on or adjacent to any yellow road. Road right of ways may extend as far as fences along adjacent property. No landings on any paved roads or related berms inside Sandia Pueblo-Tramway, Roy, Highway 313, I-25, relief Rd from Village. The yellow restricted area extends as far as the fence line north and south of Roy Road.*
 - d. *Complete Sandia Pueblo landing form before leaving*

V. NON-COMPETITIVE EVENTS

In addition to the general AIBF rules, the following additional rules apply to the named events.

A. Mass Ascensions

1. Scheduled to take place on the mornings of October 3, 4, 7, 10, and 11 with officially registered balloons launching from Balloon Fiesta Park-North. The Mass Ascensions scheduled for the two weekends (October 3, 4, 10 and 11) are non-competitive events.
2. Preparing for a safe and organized launch is critical to the safe operations of all pilots launching from Balloon Fiesta Park during mass ascensions. In order to ensure a timely launch for all pilots, the following rules apply:
 - a. Balloon Fiesta's FAA Waiver allows balloons to take off 30 minutes prior to sunrise. Weather conditions permitting, first-wave balloons in the first three downwind rows should be ready to cold inflate by 6:45 a.m. unless notified of a different time by the Balloonmeister or Launch Director.
 - b. "Balloon of the Day" carries the American Flag and launches as close as practical with the start of the National Anthem (as early as 0645). Weather and flight conditions will always dictate the actual launch schedule.
 - c. Balloons scheduled to launch in the first three, downwind rows should be ready for cold inflation immediately following the National Anthem.
 - d. Launch Directors will be present to help ensure this adherence to a timely launch.

B. Glows

Twilight Twinkle Glow™ will take place on the evening of October 3, *Balloon Glow* will take place on the evening of October 4 and *Night Magic Glow™* will take place on the evening of October 10. Balloons are inflated, tethered and operate their burners on command.

1. Balloons must be specifically registered for the event (*Twilight Twinkle Glow™*, *Balloon Glow* or *Night Magic Glow™*) in which they are participating.
2. Participating pilots must attend the event briefing at 1730 hours held on Balloon Fiesta Park-North at the Sid Cutter Pilots' Pavilion. The pilot must be registered to the balloon in which he is glowing and remain in the balloon during the Glows.
3. Pilots will be assigned a position on the field. This position is independent of the assigned launch site for the morning flying events. The assigned site will be printed on the Glow vehicle pass.
4. Balloons must be securely tethered to the chase vehicles(s) with a minimum of one tether line. A "quick-release" system, by itself, is not sufficient. Tie-off to trailers is prohibited. Balloons are not to lift off the ground at any time. Balloons not complying with these rules will be required to immediately deflate and cease participation in the event. Two tie-off lines may be required.
5. Propane will be supplied to those balloons participating in the Glow events. Refueling times will be printed on the Glow vehicle pass and will also be announced at the event briefing. The vehicle pass also serves as the glow and refueling chit.

C. Special Shape Glowdeo™

Takes place on the afternoons of October 8 and 9. Approximately 100 Special Shape Balloons will tether on Balloon Fiesta Park-North. Only balloons registered in the Special Shape Glowdeo™ (or other balloons with specific permission from the Event Director) will be allowed to inflate on Balloon Fiesta Park-North during these events. Additionally, balloons not registered in this event may not operate within the restricted airspace described in Section 1, IV, G (Page 12).

1. Participating balloons must be specifically registered for this event.
2. Pilots will be assigned a position on the field by launch site. This position is independent of the assigned launch site for other AIBF events and will be printed on the Glow vehicle pass.
3. Participating pilots must attend the event briefings held on Balloon Fiesta Park-North. Briefings will be held prior to each event at 1730 hours at The Sid Cutter Pilots Pavilion. The pilot must be registered to the balloon in which he is glowing and remain in the balloon during the Glowdeo.
4. During static displays, balloons must be securely tethered to chase vehicles with at least one tether line. A “quick-release” system, by itself, is not sufficient. Tie-off to trailers is prohibited. Balloons may not lift off the ground at any time. Balloons not complying with these rules will be required to immediately deflate and cease participation in the Special Shape Glowdeo™. Two tie-off lines may be required.
5. Propane will be supplied to those balloons participating in the Special Shapes Glowdeo™. Refueling times will be printed on the Special Shapes vehicle pass and will also be announced at the event briefing. The vehicle pass also serves as the glow and refueling chit.

D. Dawn Patrol & Krispy Kreme Morning Glow

Dawn Patrol will be flown each morning of Balloon Fiesta. Krispy Kreme Morning Glows are scheduled for weekends and Wednesday.

1. To participate in Dawn Patrol, balloons must be registered and will launch either from Balloon Fiesta Park-North or will attempt to fly over or near Balloon Fiesta Park-North.
2. All Dawn Patrol balloons are scheduled to launch approximately one (1) hour before sunrise.
3. All participating balloons must have the appropriate lighting as required by 14 CFR 91.209.

4. Krispy Kreme Morning Glow participants will inflate at approximately 6:30 am and will remain tethered (not leaving the ground) until normal flight operations begin at approximately 7:00 am.
5. Mandatory briefing for Dawn Patrol and Krispy Kreme Morning Glow participants will be at 5:30 AM at L-3 launch site

E. Flight of Nations

1. This event is scheduled for Wednesday, October 7 prior to the Mass Ascension and after the “Balloon of the Day” is launched.
2. A maximum of two balloons from each nation will be allowed to enter in this event (approximately 20 nations).
3. The regular Mass Ascension and competition will launch immediately following the launch of the ***Flight of the Nations*** balloons.

F. Balloons (Albuquerque) Aloft

This is an “off-site” event that takes place Friday, October 2, 2026, in which the balloons will launch or tether from various schools throughout Albuquerque and Rio Rancho. Balloons/pilots must be registered for this event. Participants shall adhere to AIBF rules, 14 CFR and the FAA Waiver. Weather and pilot briefing will be announced on KKOB 770 AM radio (approximately 0700 hours) and AIBF radio frequencies.

1. Pilots who participate in this event are encouraged to “teach” the children about ballooning.
2. Pilots are prohibited from taking school children as passengers.
3. If balloons are unable to launch, pilots are encouraged to tether or perform a static display.
4. Participating pilots will only be assigned to schools that have given permission to AIBF for launching.
5. Pilots and crew should locate school personnel (principal, security, etc.) prior to entering school property.
6. If a pilot must cancel their school assignment, they **MUST** notify AIBF 24 hours in advance so that appropriate assignment changes can be made.
7. Propane will be supplied to those balloons participating in the Balloons (Albuquerque) Aloft. Refueling times will be printed on the vehicle pass and will also be announced at the event briefing. The perforated vehicle pass also serves as the refueling chit.

VI. COMPETITIVE EVENTS

- A. Format:** Competitors will be assigned to competition groups based on balloon size. Daily prizes will be awarded for each competition task. Overall prizes will be awarded based on cumulative results for daily competition tasks for all competitive pilots without regard to balloon size or competition group.
- B. Schedule:** See the attached 2026 Launch Schedule (Appendix B) for your assigned competitive event for each day. Please note your daily scheduled flight may change due to weather and/or wind direction. The morning competitions will be announced at each morning's pilot briefing.
- C. Flight Crewmembers:** The maximum allowable number of Flight Crewmembers per balloon is limited to the number allowed by the balloon manufacturer's flight manual and insurance coverage but in no case may it exceed four (4) Flight Crewmembers, including the pilot (except for Official Ride Concessionaire) unless the pilot has received prior, written authorization from the Event Director for additional Flight Crewmembers.
- D. Competition Rules:** **Pilots participating in competitive events shall obey all Balloon Fiesta Rules and Regulations as contained in Sections 1 and 2 of this Manual.**

1. Launch

- a. Pilots competing must launch at least .75 statute mile (1.21 km) (unless changed by the Balloonmeister) from the designated target area (for targets located at the Launch Field the measurement will be from the center of Balloon Fiesta Park-North as indicated on the map). See Section 2, I, D, 4 (Page 16) for penalties associated with distance infringements.
- b. Launch Directors will not be provided for launches from other than Balloon Fiesta Park-North.
- c. The scoring window for pilots competing in flight competitions located at Balloon Fiesta Park-North will open at 0800, unless modified over radio station KKOB AM 770 or AIBF radio frequencies before 0730. No result may be achieved prior to the start of the scoring window.
- d. Pilots competing in an HWZ or other "off field" competitive tasks may launch from Balloon Fiesta Park-North or pilot-selected individual launch areas as announced at the pilot briefing. If launching from Balloon Fiesta Park-North, all launch rules must be obeyed. See Section 2, II, G (Page 19).
- e. Pilots launching from Balloon Fiesta Park North must launch with their flight wave or as directed by the Balloonmeister or his designated official. Violation of this rule will result in disqualification from that task.

2. Ground Contact and Altitude

- a. Pilots may not make ground contact after launch until they throw their markers and clear the scoring area. See Section 2, II, P, 1 and 2 (Page 22) for ground contact definition and related penalties.

- b. Landing and re-launching prior to throwing the marker is not allowed and no physical assistance from the ground is allowed after launch. Penalty for infringement is disqualification from the task.
- c. Waiver altitude restrictions are in effect (e.g. 75 feet AGL over the crowd and other on-field obstacles, 200 feet AGL on approaches from the south and other areas designated on the competition map). Competitors may descend to the surface once inside the flagged target area. Penalty for infringement of this rule is up to 500 competition points and/or loss of up to one day's flying privileges/propane.

3. Target Area

- a. Only authorized markers that land within the flagged/paved boundary of the Target Area will be scored. See Appendix D (page 47) for outline of scoring/flagging areas at Balloon Fiesta Park-North. Scoring areas at offsite targets will be limited to flagged boundary, confines of the field or 100 meters from the center of the target, *whichever is less*.
- b. If competition is canceled for any reason, two legs of the "X", if displayed, will be moved to form a "V". A colored smoke grenade may also be used.
- c. When throwing at a target at the Balloon Fiesta Park-North target area, do not throw any marker or other scoring device unless you are certain it will land in the scoring area. Markers dropped outside the flagged area may result in a penalty of 50 task points.
- d. Pole rings dropped outside of the flagged area will not be returned for future days' competitions.

4. Marker

- a. Competition pilots will be supplied with pre-numbered markers for competition. It is the pilot's responsibility to make sure the proper banner number is on the end of the marker tail. No additional information is required on the end of the tail.
- b. Only authorized current-year markers may be used.
- c. Measurements will be based on the final landing spot of the marker. Markers will be measured from the closest part of the weighted portion of the marker.
- d. Markers supplied by AIBF will be used for scoring purposes to create a physical mark. Competitors are responsible for collecting the necessary marker(s) before the task. The marker must not be modified in any way. Penalty for modified or unauthorized markers is up to 250 task points.
- e. Pilot markers in the Target Area with no identification and which officials cannot determine with certainty the pilot associated with the marker will receive a No Result for the task.

- f. Competitors are responsible for returning any unused markers. Penalty for unreturned markers is \$10 USD per marker. Failure to pay any unreturned marker fees may result in expulsion of the pilot from future AIBF competition and/or future AIBF events.

5. Landing

- a. Landings at off-field targets must be downwind of the target a minimum of 100 meters from the displayed target unless this rule is waived by the Balloonmeister or the scoring team at the target. Penalty for infringement of this rule is up to 500 competition points and/or loss of up to one day's flying privileges/propane.
- b. Pilots whose crew drive through or infringe the off-field scoring areas will be penalized up to 200 task points.

6. Task Cancellation and Scoring Period

- a. If any competitive event is cancelled prior to its scheduled completion, no scores will be computed for that event.
- b. Official time is GPS time.
- c. Scoring period for all tasks will close at 0930. The Balloonmeister may amend the scoring period time if necessary and will announce any amendments using AIBF radio frequencies or KKOB 770 AM by 0730.

E. Championship Competition Tasks: Scores in Competitive Flights scheduled for Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday will count toward your overall score.

The Champion shall be the competitor who has the highest aggregate score at the end of the event. Interference from any balloon (i.e. competitive, non-competitive, ride or non-registered) will not be grounds for protest. Balloons assigned to participate in these events will fly into the Launch Field (Balloon Fiesta Park-North) or off-field targets designated by the Balloonmeister at the pilot briefing. Whenever a pilot may choose his launch site outside Balloon Fiesta Park he must launch a minimum of .75 statute mile (1.21 km) from center of Balloon Fiesta Park-North.

1. Fly in Tasks (FIN)

- a. If conducted, pilots participating in this event will launch from a site of their own choice, excluding Prohibited Zones (PZs) and/or Sensitive Areas (SAs) and no closer than .75 statute mile (1.21 km) from the center of Balloon Fiesta Park-North, unless changed by the Balloonmeister.
- b. They will fly to the designated Target Area of Balloon Fiesta Park-North and attempt to drop their markers as close as possible to the center of the target. Shortest distance is best.
- c. Competition pilots launching from Balloon Fiesta Park will be disqualified from that task.

2. Maximum Distance Single Drop (XSD)

- a. If conducted, a Maximum Distance Single Drop competition will be announced at the Pilot Briefing.
- b. Scoring areas will be outlined in white with an “X” between scoring areas. Competitors will drop one marker away from the “X” as possible in a scoring area.
- c. To achieve a result, a marker must land inside one of the scoring areas. A marker landing inside a scoring area (triangle) will be measured to the center of the “X” (the “X” is not in the scoring area). The best result will be the greatest distance.
- d. The material used to outline the scoring areas will be considered a part of the scoring area.
- e. Competition pilots launching from Balloon Fiesta Park will achieve a “no result” for that day’s task.

3. Minimum Distance Double Drop (MDD)

- a. If conducted, Minimum Distance Double Drop competition will be announced at the Pilot Briefing.
- b. Scoring areas will be outlined in white with an “X” between them. Competitors will drop two markers as close together as possible – one each in two different outlined scoring areas.
- c. To achieve a result, markers must land inside each of the corresponding scoring areas. Each marker landing inside a scoring area (triangle) will be measured to the center of the “X” (the “X” is not in the scoring area). The best result will be the shortest combined distance.
- d. The material used to outline the scoring areas will be considered a part of the scoring area.
- e. Competition pilots launching from Balloon Fiesta Park will achieve a “no result” for that day’s task.

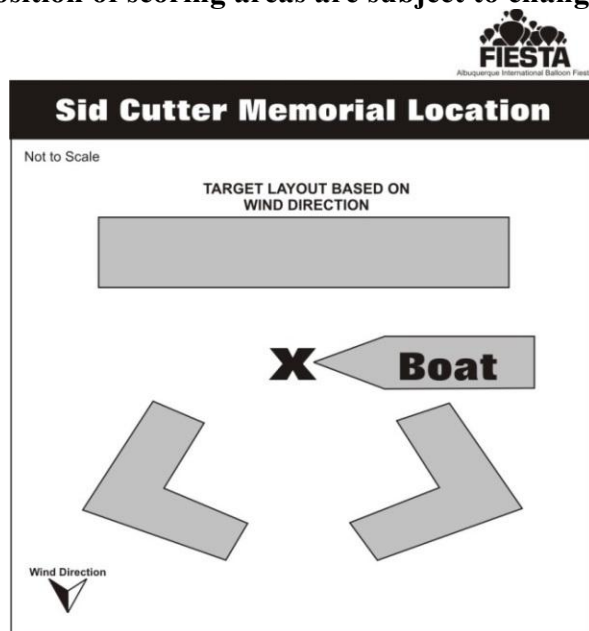
4. Maximum Distance Double Drop (XDD)

- a. If conducted, Maximum Distance Double Drop competition will be announced at the Pilot Briefing.
- b. Scoring areas will be outlined in white with an “X” between them. Competitors will drop two markers as far apart as possible – one each in two different outlined scoring areas.
- c. To achieve a result, markers must land inside each of the corresponding scoring areas. Each marker landing inside a scoring area (triangle) will be measured to the center of the “X” (the “X” is not in the scoring area). The best result will be the greatest combined distance.

- d. The material used to outline the scoring areas will be considered a part of the scoring area.
 - e. Competition pilots launching from Balloon Fiesta Park will achieve a “no result” for that day’s task.
5. **Fiesta Declared Goal (JDG)**
- a. If conducted, pilots fly to the target designated at pilot briefing and drop a marker as close as possible to the target located within the Target Area. Launches from outside of Balloon Fiesta Park must be at least .75 statute mile (1.21 km) from the center of Balloon Fiesta Park-North.
 - b. They will fly to the designated Target Area and attempt to drop their marker as close as possible to the center of the target. Shortest distance is best.
 - c. Unless allowed by the Balloonmeister at Pilots’ Briefing, competitive pilots launching from Balloon Fiesta Park will achieve a “no result” for that day’s task.
6. **Multiple Fiesta Declared Goals (HWZ)**
- a. If conducted, pilots fly to any one of the targets designated at pilot briefing and drop a marker as close as possible to a target. Launches from outside of Balloon Fiesta Park must be at least .75 statute mile (1.21 km) from the center of Balloon Fiesta Park-North.
 - b. They will fly to one of the designated Target Areas and attempt to drop their marker as close as possible to the center of the target. Shortest distance is best.
 - c. Unless allowed by the Balloonmeister at Pilots’ Briefing, competition pilots launching from Balloon Fiesta Park will achieve a “no result” for that day’s task.
7. **Gordon Bennett Memorial (GBM):**
- a. If conducted, the Gordon Bennett Memorial will be announced at the Pilot Briefing.
 - b. Competitors will attempt to drop their marker within a designated scoring area close as possible to the center of a set target.
 - c. Scores will be measured from the center of the target.
 - d. Any marker outside of the announced scoring area will not be scored.
 - e. Shortest distance scored is best.
 - f. Competition pilots launching from Balloon Fiesta Park will achieve a “no result” for that day’s task.
8. **Sid Cutter Memorial (SCMT)**
- a. If conducted, the Sid Cutter Memorial will be announced at the Pilot Briefing.

- b. The task is a limited scoring area task and is intended to represent a pond with a boat anchored in it, and three shore areas indicated by shapes outlined in white.
 - c. The boat and the three outlined shore areas are the primary scoring areas.
 - d. Markers landing inside the target area but outside the primary scoring areas will be measured on a direct line to the displayed target (X) and 100 meters will be added to the result.
 - e. The tip of the bow of the boat will be the best result for the task.
 - f. Adjustments to the scoring area may be announced at the Pilot Briefing.
 - g. Competitors will attempt to drop their marker in one of the primary scoring areas as close as possible to the displayed target (X). The result is the horizontal distance from the valid mark to the displayed target (X) keeping in mind that a 300' distance penalty will be added to any marker result outside of the boat and the three outlined shore areas. Shortest result, after any distance adjustment added under this rule, is best. (See diagram on page 35).
 - h. Competition pilots launching from Balloon Fiesta Park will achieve a “no result” for that day’s task.
9. Two tasks may be combined during a flying event. If that happens, details of each task will be provided during the flying event briefing.

Target layout and/or position of scoring areas are subject to change based on wind direction.



Note: Scoring in a gray shaded areas will be measured directly. Markers that are not placed on the boat or in the gray shaded areas will have 300' added to their direct measurement.

F. Wednesday Mass Ascension: Individually Scored-Not Scored for Overall Competition

1. Fiesta Declared Goal(s) (JDG or HWZ)

- a. Off-field target(s) will be open from the time of initial launch from Balloon Fiesta Park-North until 0930 hours local time or as declared at that morning's briefing; modified by the Balloonmeister under Section 2, VI, D, 6(c) (page 32), or the competition is canceled.
- b. JDG or HWZ competition involving the Mass Ascension on Wednesday, October 7 will launch from Balloon Fiesta Park-North.
- c. Pilots will fly to any one of the off-field target(s) designated in that morning's Pilots' Briefing, and attempt to drop their marker as close as possible to the center of a target.
- d. For balloons launching from Balloon Fiesta Park, the available off-field targets are designated by numbers 1-11. UTM coordinates and Lat/Long (decimal) are provided for each target.
- e. Pilots launching from Balloon Fiesta Park must launch with their flight wave or as directed by the Balloonmeister or his designated official. Violation of this rule will result in disqualification from that task.
- f. The off-field target locations will be shown on a map at the base of the Pilot Briefing Tower.

Possible Championship & Non-Championship Targets

#	UTM	Lat/Long
1	13S 354017/3894385	35.181832/-106.603273
2	357466/3893962	35.178520/-106.565339
3	352496/3898742	35.220885/-106.620754
4	353341/3891348	35.154363/-106.610152
5	353734/3894125	35.179452/-106.606339
6	348335/3894474	35.181799/-106.665661
7	356045/3896203	35.198516/-106.581325
8	352317/3894401	35.181734/-106.621936
9	355413/3893421	35.173346/-106.587773
10	352712/3902681	35.256422/-106.619087

2. Prize/Pole Ring Toss Rules

- a. Pilots competing in these events will launch from a site of their choice, excluding PZs and SAs, at least .75 statute mile (1.21 km) from the center of Balloon Fiesta Park-North, unless declared otherwise by the Balloonmeister.
- b. They will attempt to fly to the flagged Target Area at Balloon Fiesta Park-North and place their ring over a pole that will be approximately 30 ft. high.

- c. Pilots may also compete in other competitive tasks as selected by the event Officials in conjunction with the Ring Toss.
- d. The ring must be a current year Balloon Fiesta ring with the pilot's current year banner number attached and must remain on the pole to be counted. Unauthorized rings will be invalid for prizes.
- e. Time of events: Thursday, October 8 and Friday, October 9 from 0800 to 0930 hours local time unless modified over AIBF radio frequencies, KKOB AM 770 and AIBF text messaging service.
- f. All balloons and pilots that have previously declared their intent to participate in the Ring Toss competition may compete.
- g. There will be at least two tasks being conducted simultaneously. The results from the FIT, Minimum Distance Double Drop, Maximum Distance Double Drop, Sid Cutter Memorial or Gordon Bennett Memorial will count toward the overall AIBF competition standings. Results of the Ring Toss events will have no effect on the overall AIBF standings.
- h. Officials may be in the general launch areas to record violations of distance requirements.
- i. At the morning's pilot briefing the Balloonmeister will announce the minimum distance of the launch from the center of Balloon Fiesta Park-North.
- j. Balloons may not touch the ground after launch prior to ring placement over the pole. Ground contact anywhere inside the Scoring Area during competition is not allowed. Contact with any poles within the Scoring Area is not considered ground contact under rule Section 2, II, P, 1 and 2 (Page 22). Infringement of these rules will result in forfeiture of any prize won.
- k. Prize distribution for the Ring Toss will be announced at the morning briefing.
- l. If wind conditions permit, pilots may make multiple attempts to ring the pole. Landing and re-launching is not allowed. Attempts to ring the pole may not involve the use of any tool, and are limited to the hands of any person in the basket with each person keeping both feet on the floor of the basket while attempting to place the ring over the pole.
- m. Any ring that lands outside of the target area may not be returned to the pilot and therefore the pilot may be ineligible to compete in any other ring toss competition.
- n. Balloons may not receive physical assistance from the ground after launching.
- o. Any balloon not competing in the flight competition is to remain clear of the Target Area.
- p. If any event is canceled due to weather or if the competition period ends, a smoke grenade will be ignited in the Target Area.

- q. Pilots are responsible for returning any unused rings. Penalty for unreturned rings is \$10 USD. Failure to pay any unreturned ring fee may result in expulsion of the pilot from future AIBF competition and/or future AIBF events.

G. Scoring:

1. **Result:** A competitor's result is the achieved outcome in a task including penalties. Results will be expressed in meters with an accuracy of two decimal places.
2. **Score:** A competitor's score is the points achieved in a task when applying the appropriate formulas. Task or competition penalties may be applied according to the rules.
3. **Publication of Scores:** The scores of each task shall be published with a minimum of delay on the Official Electronic Notice Board at: WatchmeFly.com (results may also be posted at www.balloonfiesta.com)

Score posted will have the following status:

PROVISIONAL RESULTS: Provisional result scores are published for information only and have no validity for timing purposes. They serve the purpose of allowing competitors to check their pending results before a penalty or result mistakes (if any) are placed into the scoring software for the assignment of points.

OFFICIAL: Official scores will be published as soon as possible on days of competition. Time periods for complaints/protests start from the publication time of Official scores. Publication of a new version of officials' scores will only extend the complaint time in the matter concerned.

FINAL: Official scores will become Final 8 hours after Official posting or after all relevant time periods have expired, whichever is later. Regardless of these times, the Officials or Jury may require a correction of the results and/or penalties due to scoring errors discovered after scores have been designated Final.

4. Score Tabulations

- a. Only those markers landing in the Target Area will be measured.
 - b. Points for each task will be calculated using the WatchMeFly scoring Software utilizing proportional scoring method. See Appendix F – Proportional Scoring Formula.
 - c. Daily results will be determined by separate ranking of pilots by competition group.
 - d. Determination of the Balloon Fiesta Championship winners will be determined by consolidating all results for all pilots into one single group for each task. The Event Champion will be the pilot with the greatest cumulative score after accumulating points from daily tasks conducted on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday competing as one single group. These results will be updated and published daily.
5. Except for Minimum and Maximum Distance Double Drop tasks, two-part tasks or tasks modified by the Balloonmeister at pilot briefing, only one marker may be dropped from

the same balloon during the same task. Penalty for infringement of this rule will result in a “no result” for the applicable task(s).

6. When dropping a marker, the tail must be unrolled before it touches the ground. Penalty for minor infringement with no competitive advantage: 50 task points; otherwise 250 task points for a competitive advantage.
7. Winners will be determined for each competitive group of each day’s task and awarded medals. Ties for daily prizes will be shared equally. Medals and daily prize money will not be given until the Final scores are posted.

H. Penalties

1. In addition to any penalty listed in these rules, the pilot violating a rule or provision may be required to forfeit any prizes won.
2. Penalties may be applied to more than one task, flight and/or event for a single rule infringement.
3. Penalties will be applied to the competition number, regardless whether the primary or additional pilot flew the task. When a competition # is set down for a flight, the primary or additional pilot cannot compete during that time of penalty.

I. Complaints and Protests

1. An inquiry is a request by a pilot to the Chief Scoring Official or his assistant to investigate any operational matter in which the pilot is dissatisfied. Inquiries are usually verbal.
2. A formal Complaint must be in writing to the Chief Scoring Officer or his designee. The Complaint must be submitted within eight (8) hours of the Official results being posted. Once received, the Complaint will be posted on the WatchMeFly electronic notice board.
3. The Official scores will be posted on the Official Electronic Notice Board by as soon as possible of the day of the flight. Unless a Complaint is filed which could affect the scores, they will become final eight (8) hours after the Official scores are posted, whichever is later.
4. The Balloonmeister will review the Complaint and will give a written Reply within three hours of receipt of the Complaint. The Reply will be posted on the WatchMeFly electronic notice board.
5. If dissatisfied with the Balloonmeister’s Reply, the pilot may Protest to the Jury. To do so the pilot must, within one hour of the posting of the Balloonmeister’s reply to his Complaint, declare his intention to Protest. This declaration must be in writing in English and accompanied by \$100 (USD) deposit. The written Protest must be presented to the Chief Scoring Officer within two hours of the *declaration of intent to Protest*.
6. Written Complaints, declarations of intention to Protest with deposit, and written Protests shall be given to the Chief Scoring Officer or his assistant who will record the time of

receipt. The hours between 2100 and 0800 local time will be disregarded for the purpose of the time limits.

7. The Protest will be forwarded to the Protest Jury.
8. A pilot who has protested must be available to make verbal presentation of his case to the Jury in addition to his written statement.
9. The Jury, consisting of one member of the AIBF Board of Directors, a competitor drawn at random and Event Director will convene to hear the Protest. The decision of the Jury will be final.
10. All Protests and decisions will be posted on the Official Electronic Notice Board.
11. The deposit will be returned only where a Protest is upheld or is withdrawn prior to the hearing by the Jury.

J. Shortened Time Limits

1. On Friday, October 9, Complaints must be made to the Chief Scoring Officer within one hour of publication of the Official results for that day's tasks. The Balloonmeister will have 1 hour to respond to the complaint.
2. On Friday, October 9, Protests must be made within one hour of the Balloonmeister's Reply to the pilot's Complaint being posted.

VII. PROPANE

A. Day Fueling Operations

1. The Event Director, Balloonmeister, Assistant Balloonmeister or Chief Safety Official are the only person(s) who may approve an exception to these propane rules.
2. Propane will be available at the Propane refueling site from 0900 hrs. to 1200 hrs. each day. Propane will also be available following Balloons (Albuquerque) Aloft, Twilight Twinkle Glow TM, Balloon Glow and Night Magic TM and the evening Special Shape Glowdeos for Balloons participating in those events. Times for these refueling activities are published with each respective event's information. **NOTE:** the propane area may close at any time if necessary, in the interest of safety.
3. The adhesive number supplied with the basket banner must be affixed to a window of the chase vehicle and an official 2026 AIBF banner must be properly attached to the basket and displayed so that it can be easily read by the propane crew.
4. Propane will only be dispensed to holders of a signed *Flight Crewmember Acknowledgement* (Appendix G) with properly validated bar code. The number on the form **MUST** match the number on the basket banner and adhesive numbers on the chase vehicle.

5. *Flight Crewmember Acknowledgements* must be signed, dated and returned for each day's flight. Pilots may not obtain unused allotments of propane from previous days or events. (Appendix G)
6. No propane tanks other than those properly mounted to the basket for that particular balloon system may be taken in the refueling area. All other tanks **MUST** be left with the crew outside the propane refueling area. Only balloon tanks may be refueled. No other tanks will be filled (including trucks). Propane tanks used in gondolas constructed of solid plastic or fiberglass must be refueled outside the gondola.
7. ***All vehicles entering the propane fueling area must enter from northbound West Wind Road. Vehicles will not be allowed to conduct a U-Turn from Pilots' Parkway entering the Launch Field.***
8. All traffic is one-way in the fueling area. The maximum speed while in the fueling area is 15 MPH.
9. No Alcoholic beverages may be consumed anywhere on the refueling site. Persons believed to be intoxicated will be prohibited from refueling.
10. No animals except certified service animals will be allowed in the refueling area.
11. No person under the age of fourteen is allowed in the refueling area under any circumstances.
12. No Nylon jackets may be worn in the refueling area. Flags must be taken down and stowed before entering the refueling area.
13. Only experienced personnel accompanying the balloon shall do the refueling. If there are no experienced personnel accompanying the balloon, it will not be refueled.
14. Only two persons per vehicle are permitted in the refueling area. A third person is allowed if the balloon basket is contained in an enclosed trailer. One interpreter may be allowed as necessary.
15. Vehicles will wait at the staging area until directed to a refueling position by propane personnel.
16. **ALL REFUELING PERSONNEL (CREW) MUST CONDUCT THEMSELVES IN A SAFE AND ORDERLY MANNER WHILE IN THE PROPANE AREA.**
17. **NO SMOKING OR STRIKERS IN THE REFUELING AREA.**
18. Pilot lights and all other sources of ignition in recreational type vehicles must be turned off prior to entering the refueling area.
19. All vehicle radios, two-way radios, cellular phones and other electronic devices must be turned off prior to entering the refueling area and shall remain off until the vehicles are completely outside the refueling area.

20. While approaching the refueling area the windows on both the driver's side and the passenger's side must be lowered. This is to facilitate communications between the driver and the propane crew.
21. Vehicle engines must be turned off during refueling.
22. Prior to beginning refueling:
 - Open pickups and trailers must lower or remove tailgates
 - Covered pickups, vans and trailers must remove the basket/gondola during refueling to the extent the venting of tanks and the person(s) refueling are outside the enclosure. Additional side doors or windows will be opened to aid in ventilation.
 - Clamshell trailers must lower or remove the tailgate/ramp.
 - Basket/gondola covers shall be lifted up to at least 12 inches from the bottom, opened on one side, or completely removed.
23. No one is allowed to remain inside an enclosed trailer, basket/gondola or vehicle passenger compartment during refueling without permission from the Event Director, Balloonmeister, Assistant Balloonmeister, or Chief of Safety.
24. Pilots/crews violating propane rules may be penalized up to 250 competition points and/or loss of up to one day's flight privileges/propane. Repeated offenses may subject pilots/crews to expulsion from the event.

B. Night Fueling Operations

1. All general propane rules apply.
2. Vehicle headlights will be turned off upon reaching the refueling check-in and will remain off until the vehicle is totally clear of the fueling area except vehicles with "auto lights".
3. Only "hazardous location approved" trailer dome lights and "hazardous location approved" flashlights may be used during fueling.

C. Closing Day Operations and Schedule

1. Propane may be burned off on Saturday, October 10 and Sunday, October 11 only on the extreme West side of Balloon Fiesta Park, in the lot known as the West Lot.
2. Personnel will be available to nitrogen purge tanks between the hours of 0900 hrs. and 1200 hrs. on the last weekend of Balloon Fiesta.
3. **Raw propane may never be vented on Balloon Fiesta Park.**

VIII. GENERAL INFORMATION

New Mexico/Albuquerque Laws and Ordinances

Seat Belts: In the State of New Mexico, requirements for using seat belts differ based on the age of the passenger and where they are seated. The following are minimums:

1. Children up to one (1) year old are required to be in a rear-facing restraint device.
2. Children ages one (1) through four (4) or who weigh less than 40 pounds must be properly secured in a child passenger restraint device.
3. Children five (5) and six (6) years old or who weigh less than 60 pounds must be secured in a child booster seat or an appropriate child passenger restraint device.
4. Children seven (7) through twelve (12) years old must be in a booster seat until they fit into an adult seat belt. A child is properly secured in an adult seat belt when the shoulder strap crosses the center of the child's chest, allowing the child to sit back against the vehicle seat with knees bent over the seat edge.

Pick-up Truck: NO ONE under the age of eighteen (18) can ride in the open bed of a pick-up truck.

OPEN CONTAINER: In the State of New Mexico, no person shall drink any alcoholic beverage, or have in his possession any container of alcohol which has been opened or had its seal broken while in a vehicle on a public highway. It is also unlawful for the registered owner of the vehicle to allow an open container of alcohol when the vehicle is on any public highway within the state.

Cell Phones: It is illegal in the City of Albuquerque and the state of New Mexico to operate a hand-held cell phone while driving. Drivers must use a hands-free device or will be subject to fines and citations if cited by local law enforcement.

It is illegal throughout the State of New Mexico for anyone to text while driving.

Smoking: Smoking (including e-cigarettes) is not allowed in City Parks; Balloon Fiesta Park is a City Park.

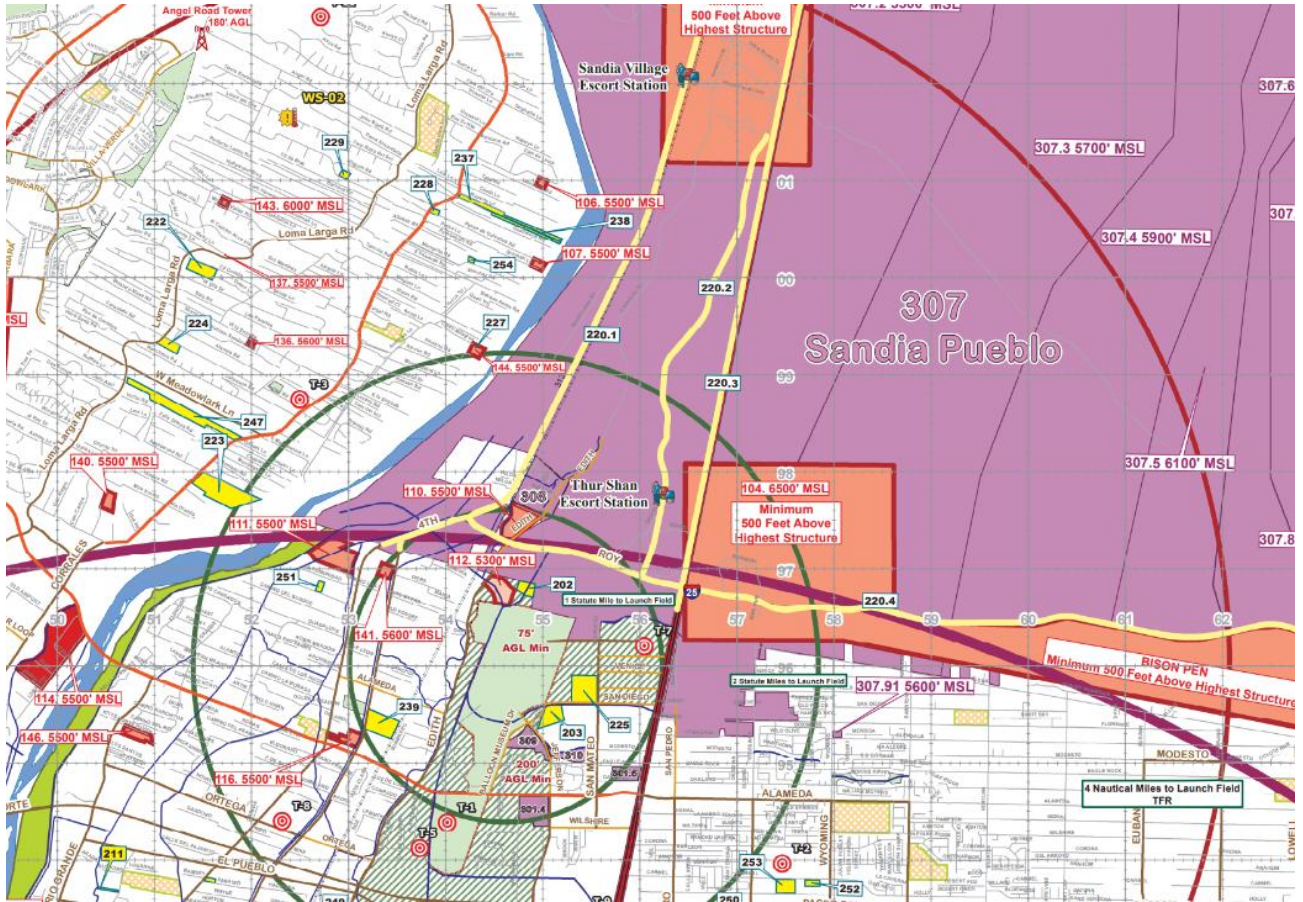
Stolen Vehicles or Trailers: Any vehicle or trailer that is stolen must be reported to local law enforcement immediately. In addition, report all stolen vehicles and trailers to the unified command center at 505 821-7300 immediately.

Federal Communications Commission (FCC): Ensure you are appropriately licensed and that you operate all radios and communication devices in compliance with FCC rules and regulations.

The frequencies that have been pre-programmed into the AIBF Pilot radios have been licensed to AIBF. Balloon Fiesta pilots are authorized to use those frequencies during Balloon Fiesta.

***Note:** Appendix A on page 44 is an excerpt of the 2026 Competition Map. All participating Balloon Fiesta Pilots should carry the actual Competition Map on board their aircraft.*

APPENDIX A



APPENDIX B

Odd and Even numbers are determined by the **last digit** of the banner number. Example: (001 ODD), (002 EVEN)

2026 ALBUQUERQUE INTERNATIONAL BALLOON FIESTA® LAUNCH SCHEDULE									
	MASS ASCENSION		COMPETITION DAYS		MASS ASCENSION	SPECIAL SHAPE RODEO/ COMPETITION DAYS		MASS ASCENSION	
BANNER #	SAT Oct. 3	SUN Oct. 4	MON Oct. 5	TUE Oct. 6	WED Oct. 7**	THUR Oct. 8	FRI Oct. 9	SAT Oct. 10	SUN Oct. 11
ODD #S	2ND WAVE	1ST WAVE			2ND WAVE	SPECIAL SHAPE RODEO	SPECIAL SHAPE RODEO	1ST WAVE	2ND WAVE
EVEN #S	1ST WAVE	2ND WAVE			1ST WAVE	SPECIAL SHAPE RODEO	SPECIAL SHAPE RODEO	2ND WAVE	1ST WAVE
NON COMPETITORS			1ST WAVE	1ST WAVE		1ST WAVE	1ST WAVE		
COMPETITORS			FIN, TBA	FIN, TBA		FIN, TBA	FIN, TBA		
SPECIAL SHAPES						1ST WAVE	1ST WAVE		

Please note your daily scheduled flight may change due to weather and/or wind direction.

**Launch is adjusted to accommodate the Flight of the Nations wave.

APPENDIX C

LANDOWNER RELATIONS

All AIBF participants and crews are reminded of the importance of Landowner Relations. It is important to remember the major investment landowners have in their property, and in many cases their land is their livelihood. It is important to remember that good landowner relations are essential to our sport. Their properties include buildings, crops, pets, and livestock (cattle, pigs and horses) which may be easily damaged or frightened.

Please observe these guidelines when dealing with our landowners:

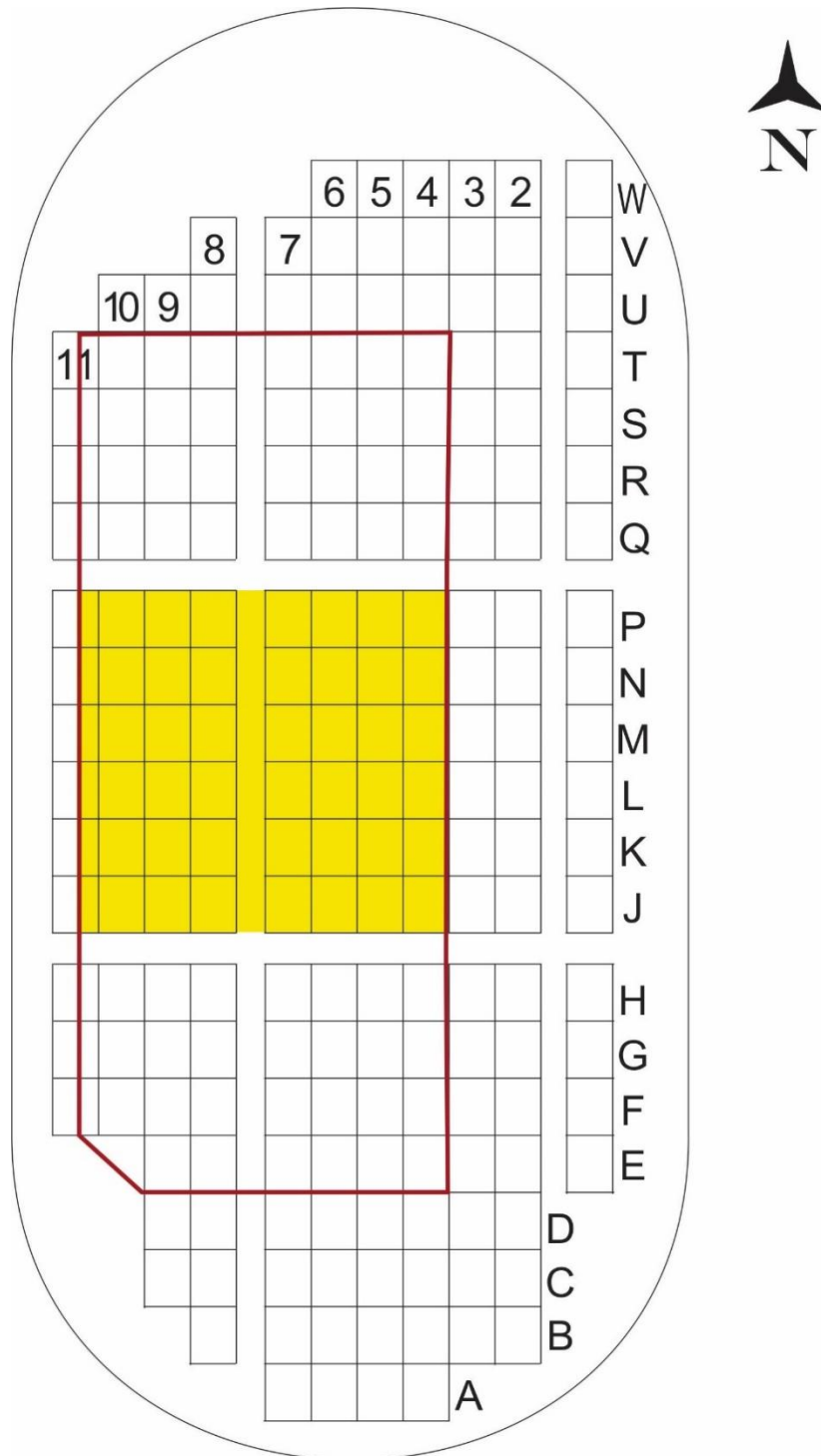
- Always be COURTEOUS and respectful of the fact that you are trespassing unless you were invited onto the property.
- Select a landing site that will cause the least possible inconvenience to the owner.
- Select a landing site FREE OF CROPS and be particularly CAREFUL OF ANIMALS on the approach and on possible overshoot.
- After landing, DISCOURAGE ONLOOKERS from coming onto the land unless the owner is present and grants have their permission.
- ALWAYS obtain permission BEFORE you bring your retrieval vehicle on private property. And, ask for specific instructions on how and where to enter the property with your retrieval vehicle.
- Ensure FENCES are NOT DAMAGED and gates are left as you find them.
- DO NOT let anyone LITTER the property.
- If damage is caused, or the landowner wishes to take further action, exchange names and addresses and report the facts to AIBF officials upon your return. As stated above on page 21 (“Landings”), pilots bear sole responsibility for the cost of repairing or replacing landowner property that is damaged during a landing or attempted landing.
- Remember not to use the “ran out of fuel” excuse if you do damage. It is a violation of 14 CFR to run out of fuel.
- Ask Landowner to fill out information card to be turned in at Pilot Pavilion for chance to win one of the Landowner Relations Prizes.
- Landowners may display a white sheet or “X” on their property. This display may indicate permission to land on their property.

Prohibited Zones (PZs) are areas where, in the interest of safety or land owner relations, balloons may not be launched or landed and in some circumstances shall not fly at lower than a specified altitude. These are indicated on the official map in YELLOW and RED with the location and hazard description in the legend of the map. A YELLOW PZ is a restricted area where no launches or landings are permitted. A RED PZ will also include a minimum allowable altitude. If an emergency situation dictates a landing in a PZ, use caution in the landing and tact in dealing with the landowner. Penalty for infringement of this rule is up to 1000 competition points and/or loss of up to one day’s flying privileges/propane. Repeated violations may result in up to expulsion from the event.

Sensitive Areas (SAs) are areas where you may land as long as you exercise caution to avoid property damage and follow correct retrieval procedures. You may not launch from a Sensitive Area. These are indicated on the official map in PURPLE with location, hazard description and special retrieval procedures found in the Prohibited Zones Aerial Images manual. If an emergency situation dictates a landing in a SA, use caution in the landing and tact in dealing with the landowner.

Take Nothing but Pictures, Leave Nothing but Footprints.

APPENDIX D



Balloon Fiesta Launch Field
Flagging Location
Scoring Area

APPENDIX E

PENALTIES

Note: Provided as reference only. When this matrix is in conflict with embedded wording elsewhere in this manual, the embedded wording takes precedence.

Rule Reference	Safety Rules	Competitor Penalty	Non-comp Penalty
p.5-§1, II, D, 3; p.19-§2, II, E, 2	Too many passengers/crew on board.	Up to 500 comp pts and/or up to 1 day flight/propane	Up to 1 day flight/propane
p. 15 §2, I, B, 7 (a)	Continuing to compete with excessive damage	Up to 500 comp pts and/or up to 1 day flight/propane	Up to 1 day flight/propane
p. 15-§2, I, B, 7 (b)	Failure to report accident/incident	Up to 500 comp pts and/or up to 1 day flight/propane	Up to 1 day flight/propane
p. 17-§2, I, D, 6; p. 17-§2, II, A, 3	Violation of waiver minimum safe altitudes	Up to 500 comp pts and/or up to 1 day flight/propane	Up to 1 day flight/propane
p. 19-§2, II, G, 3	Launching without LD permission.	Up to 500 comp pts and/or up to 1 day flight/propane	Up to 1 day flight/propane
p. 20-§2, II, G, 11	Boxing back below 500' AGL.	Up to 250 tsk pts and/or up to 1 day flight/propane	Up to 1 day flight/propane
p. 20-§2, II, G, 12	Failure to use tie off and restraint harness	Up to 250 tsk points and/or up to 1 day flight/propane	Up to 1 day flight/propane
p. 20-§2, II, H, 2	Excessive rates of ascent/descent.	Up to 500 comp pts and/or up to 1 day flight/propane	Up to 1 day flight/propane
p. 21-§2, II, I, 3	Mid-air collision	Up to 1000 comp pts and/or up to 1 day flight/propane	Up to 1 day flight/propane
p. 21-§2, II, J	Dangerous flying	Up to 1000 comp pts and/or up to 1 day flight/propane	Up to 1 day flight/propane
p. 21-§2, II, K & N	Failure to clear target after marker drop	Up to 500 tsk pts and/or up to 1 day flight/propane	Up to 1 day flight/propane
p. 21-§2, II, M	Power line contact.	Up to 500 comp pts and/or up to 1 day flight/propane	Up to 1 day flight/propane
p. 23-§2, III, E	Venting raw propane on launch field	Up to 500 tsk pts and/or up to 1 day flight/propane	Up to 1 day flight/propane

Rule Reference	Administrative Rules	Competitor Penalty	Non-comp Penalty
p. 7-§1,III, D, 1	Landowner Relations	Up to 250 comp. pts and/or up to 1 day flight/propane	Up to 1 day flight/propane
p. 13-§2, I, A, 4; p. 15-§2,I,C	Cannot carry passengers for hire	Up to Event expulsion	Up to Event Expulsion
p. 16-§2, I, D, 3 (b); p. 14-§2, I, A 11; p. 16-§2, I,D,1,d; p. 21-§2,II,L	Unsportsmanlike behavior	Up to Event expulsion	Up to Event Expulsion
p. 19-§2, II, E, 3	Throwing unauthorized objects from balloon	Up to 100 tsk pts and/or up to 1 day flight/propane	Up to 1 day flight/propane
p. 19-§2, II, G, 6; p. 23-§2, III, H, 1	Unauthorized, unattended and or too many vehicles on field	Up to 250 pts and/or up to 1 day flight/propane	Up to 1 day flight/propane
p. 14- S2, I, B, 4	Failure to display Basket Banner during all AIBF flights	Up to 200 Comp.pts and/or up to 1 day flight/propane	Up to 1 day flight/propane
p. 15-S2, I, B, 7	Failure to display current year vehicle sticker during AIBF flights	Up to 200 Comp.pts and or up to 1 day flight/propane	Up to 1 day Flight/propane

Rule Reference	Competition Rules	Competitor Penalty	Non-comp Penalty
p. 19-§2, II, G, 1; p. 23-§2, II, Q	Landowner permission for launch and retrieve violations	Up to 250 task pts and/or up to 1 day flight/propane	Up to 1 day flight/propane
p.15-§2, I, B, 8	Retrieve vehicles within 100m of target	Up to 250 tsk pts and/or up to 1 day flight/propane	Up to 1 day flight/propane
p. 16-§2, I, D, 1 (e); p.39- §2, VI, H	Penalties: Unspecified	Points and/or up to 1 day flight/propane and/or up to DQ and/or expulsion	Up to 1 day flight/propane and/or DQ and or exp.
p.14-§2, I,A,12; p. 16-§2, I, D, 3 (b)	Penalties: Dishonesty	Up to 250 Comp. points and/or up to 1 day flight/propane and/or up to DQ and/or expulsion	Up to 1 day flight/propane and/or DQ and/or exp.
p. 16-§2, I, D, 4 (a-c)	Minimum launch distance violations	Up to 500 task pts	N/A
p.17-§2, II, A, 2-3	Non-Comps in Target Area below 75'	N/A	Up to 1 day flight/propane
p. 21-§2, II, O, 1; p.24 -§2, IV, A & p. 16-§2, VI, D, 5	Take-off or landing in a PZ; landing within 100m of off-field target	Up to 1000 Comp. pts and/or up to 1 day flight/propane	Up to 1 day flight/propane
p. 21-§2, II, O, 2	Altitude / PZ violations	Up to 500 comp pts and/or up to 1 day flight/propane	Up to 1 day flight/propane
p. 22-§2, II, O, 4 (h)	Interference with other competitor	Up to 500 comp pts and/or up to 1 day flight/propane	Up to 1 day flight/propane
p. 22-§2, II, P, 1	Ground contact in non-target areas	Up to 200 task pts- solid <i>*see note*</i>	N/A
p. 23-§2, II, P, 2	Ground contact in target areas	Up to 500 task pts- solid <i>*see note*</i>	N/A
p. 31-§2, VI, D, 2 (b)	Landing and re-launching before target	DQ from task	N/A
p. 31-§2, VI, D, 2 (c)	Waiver altitude violation	Up to 500 comp pts and/or up to 1 day flight/propane	Up to 1 day flight/propane
p. 31-§2, VI, D, 3 (c)	Target area: Markers dropped outside flagged area	Up to 50 task pts (<i>discretionary</i>)	N/A
p. 31-§2, VI, D, 4 (d)	Modified or unauthorized marker	Up to 250 task pts	N/A
p. 32-§2, VI, D, 5 (a)	Landing at off-field target	Up to 500 comp pts and/or up to 1 day flight/propane	Up to 1 day flight/propane
p. 32-§2, VI, D, 5 (b)	Driving through target area	Up to 200 task pts	Up to 1 day flight/propane
p. 32 §2, VI, D, 5(a)	Landing within 100m of off-field target	Up to 500 Comp. pts and or up to 1 day flight/propane	Up to 1 day Flight/propane
p. 38-§2, VI, G, 5	Too many markers dropped per task	NR from task(s)	N/A
p. 39-§2, VI, G, 6	Scoring: Marker tail not unfurled before touching ground	50 tsk pts no comp. advantage; 250 with comp. advantage	N/A

APPENDIX F – PROPORTIONAL SCORING FORMULA

Overview: The Proportional Scoring Formula is a 1,000-point task scoring system used in balloon competition scoring. The best result can receive up to 1,000 points. Other competitors are scored based on performance, rank, and whether they achieved a valid result. Any penalties are deducted after the calculated score.

Formula One - Superior Half of Performances

Used for pilots in the better/top half of valid results.

$$1000 - \left[\frac{1000 - SM}{RM - W} \right] \times (R - W)$$

Formula Two - Inferior Half of Performances

Used for pilots in the lower half of valid results.

$$1000 \times \frac{P + 1 - L}{P}$$

Formula Three - Competitors Flying but No Valid Result

Used for Group B competitors who flew the task but did not achieve a valid result.

$$1000 \times \frac{P + 1 - A}{P} - 200$$

Symbol Definitions

Symbol	Meaning
R	Competitor's result, such as distance in meters
W	Winning result
RM	Result of the median-ranked competitor
SM	Rounded score of the median-ranked competitor
P	Number of competitors ranked in the flight
M	Median rank, calculated as $P / 2$, rounded up
L	Competitor's ranking position
A	Number of competitors in Group A, meaning those with valid measured or assessed results

APPENDIX G

ALBUQUERQUE INTERNATIONAL BALLOON FIESTA FLIGHT CREW MEMBER ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND RELEASE

FLIGHT CREW:

I have been selected as flight crew aboard the hot air balloon Registration: _____ piloted by _____.

The Pilot in Command (PIC) has briefed me regarding my duties and responsibilities as a crew member in a hot air balloon flight.

RISKS OF BALLOONING: I understand that participating in a hot air balloon flight is a potentially hazardous activity. There are risks, both known and unanticipated, inherent in hot air ballooning. Such risks could lead to injury, paralysis, or death. By participating in a hot air balloon flight, I will be exposed to risks including but not limited to: damage to or loss of personal property; arrest for trespassing or other violations of the law; capsize of basket or other vehicle; collision with obstacles on the ground or in the air; accident or illness in remote locations without immediate access to medical facilities; immersion in water; hypothermia; falling from the balloon while on the ground or in the air; fire or flames; temperature extremes or inclement weather; slipping, tripping, or falling; harm from failure of equipment even when properly used; and my negligence or the negligence of Fiesta visitors, participants, pilots, or other persons. I understand that it is impossible for the PIC or Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, Inc. (AIBF) to guarantee my safety. I understand that safety risks cannot be eliminated without jeopardizing the essential qualities of the activity of hot air ballooning.

I share responsibility for safety during the flight, and I accept this responsibility. I agree to comply with instructions and directions from the PIC and the PIC's personnel before, during, and after the flight. I am responsible for assessing my fitness, alertness, and the limits of my abilities. I have no present medical or mental health condition that would render me unable to operate a hot air balloon in a safe manner or unable to participate in a hot air balloon flight.

I therefore certify under penalty of perjury to the truth of the following statements.

1. **ASSUMPTION OF RISKS:** I understand the risks of hot air ballooning, and I expressly agree and promise to accept and assume those risks, inherent and otherwise, whether or not described in this document, including that I may be injured by another person or organization's negligence. My participation is purely voluntary; I understand that I have the right to terminate my participation at any time. I elect to participate despite the risks.
2. **RELEASE:** I, on behalf of my family, heirs, assigns, personal representative, and estate, and as a condition of participating as a crewmember in Balloon Fiesta, hereby voluntarily RELEASE the PIC, AIBF, 2026 Balloon Fiesta sponsors, and launch and landing site owners, including the Sandia Pueblo, and their respective employees, volunteers, sponsors, agents, representatives, successors, and assigns from all liability and any claims, demands, or causes of action arising from my participation as a crewmember in a hot air balloon flight, including any physical or other injury to me or my property caused by the negligence of any person or organization.
3. **COMMITMENT TO SAFETY:** I shall under no circumstances act as a required pilot flight crewmember while I know or have reason to know of any medical or mental health condition that would make me unable to operate the aircraft in a safe manner.

**FLIGHT CREW MEMBER ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF PERSONAL
RESPONSIBILITY AND RELEASE**

PILOT:

I acknowledge that the foregoing individuals are members of my flight crew; that I have briefed them as outlined above; and that I have reviewed the risks of ballooning described herein. I certify under penalty of perjury to the truth of the following statements:

1. ASSUMPTION OF RISKS: I understand the risks of hot air ballooning, and expressly agree and promise to accept and assume the risks, inherent and otherwise, whether or not described in this document, including that I may be injured by another person or organization's negligence. My participation is purely voluntary; I understand that I have the right to terminate my participation at any time. I elect to participate despite the risks.

2. RELEASE: I, on behalf of my family, heirs, assigns, personal representative, and estate, and as a condition of participating as a pilot in Balloon Fiesta, hereby voluntarily RELEASE AIBF, 2026 Balloon Fiesta sponsors, and launch and landing site owners, including the Sandia Pueblo, and their respective employees, volunteers, sponsors, agents, representatives, successors, and assigns from all liability and any claims, demands, or causes of action arising from my participation as a crewmember in a hot air balloon flight, including any physical or other injury cause by the negligence of any person or organization.

3. COMMITMENT TO SAFETY: I shall under no circumstances act as a pilot while I know or have reason to know of any medical or mental health condition that would make me unable to operate the aircraft in a safe manner.

PILOT

_____ Printed name	_____ Signature	_____ Date
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FLIGHT CREW SIGNATURES:

_____ Signature	_____ Date	_____ Signature	_____ Date
_____ Signature	_____ Date	_____ Signature	_____ Date
_____ Signature	_____ Date	_____ Signature	_____ Date
_____ Signature	_____ Date	_____ Signature	_____ Date
_____ Signature	_____ Date	_____ Signature	_____ Date
_____ Signature	_____ Date	_____ Signature	_____ Date

Important Numbers

For emergencies, dial 911

AIBF

Pilot Headquarters	Open 4:00am to 10:00am each day	505-797-5744
Balloon Fiesta Public Safety		505-821-7300
Landowner Relations		505-948-0640
E-Mail contact:	Landownerrelations@balloonfiesta.com	
Balloonmeister Monitor (UHF)		(FIESTA 456.8125)

Police/Fire (Non-Emergency)

New Mexico State Police	505-841-9256
ABQ Police	505-242-2677
ABQ Fire/Rescue	505-833-7391
Kirtland AFB Police/Security	505-846-7913
Isleta Pueblo Police	505-869-3030
Sandia Pueblo Dispatch	505-798-7401
Sandoval Co Dispatch, Rio Rancho, & Corrales	505-898-7585
Bernalillo County Sheriff	505-798-7000

ABQ International Sunport

Information	505-244-7706	
Control Tower (120.3)	Approach (127.4)	505-856-4936
Ground (121.9)		
AWOS	505-242-4044	
ATIS (118.0)	505-856-4928	

Double Eagle II Airport

Control Tower (120.15)	505-352-5595
Ground (121.625)	505-244-7888
AWOS (119.025)	505-842-2009

FAA

Flight Services	800-992-7433
ABQ FSDO	505-764-1200

MISC

PNM Electric	505-241-2700
Petroglyph National Monument	505-899-0205
ABQ Open Space	505-873-6632
Balloon Fiesta Weather Loop (119.475)	