

Ground and Crew Safety

First rule: Follow instructions!

Clothing:

- Cotton or other natural against skin. Avoid nylon/polyester (it melts)
- Prefer long pants and sleeves
- Sturdy shoes with suitable traction soles. No open toes or sandals
- Gloves, prefer leather or at least leather palms/fingers
- Long hair needs to be tied back

Lifting:

- Unloading basket, envelope and other heavy equipment. **Team Effort**
- Fuel tanks weigh about 100 pounds... get help
- Smaller, lighter items such as tarps and rope bags, Lift straight and carefully using your legs, not your back

Tarps:

- Large tarps can be heavy and awkward. Yes, you can lift it, but why? **Team Effort**
- **Never** run across a tarp. Uneven ground underneath, chuck holes, air pockets or unexpected lifting by wind can cause you to trip
- Tarps can be slippery. Use caution when walking on them

Ropes/Tie-off:

- Wear gloves when handling rope. It will burn and blister your hands
- **Never** wrap a rope around any part of your body. If you let go, rope should fall free
- Never straddle a rope, especially when tethering
- Be visual, be aware. Ropes come to life in an instant and will catch you or a teammate off guard

Fan:

- One of the most dangerous pieces of equipment on the field. **Follow Instructions**
- Fire extinguisher close by but not next to the fan. Run to the extinguisher... not away from it
- **Avoid** placing rope (vent lines or tether) next to fan. Fan tarp should be secure to prevent its being sucked into the fan.
- **Avoid** loose clothing or dangly items like scarves, hoodie strings, badge lanyards, etc. Take them off if possible or tuck them away. Long hair? Tie it back and tuck it away.
- **Never** move the fan while engine is running.
- Festival or crowd events: Keep people away from the fan. Photographers, kids or other distracted spectators could unknowingly and unintentionally create problems.

Inflation/Mouth of Balloon:

- *Never wrap hands in cables/ropes*
- Watch where you step. Don't entangle your feet in cables/ropes
- Do not place feet fully inside balloon envelope. Sudden shifting will take you down
- Look at the envelope during inflation. If something looks wrong, **tell the pilot**

After Stand-Up:

- Weight on the basket but **feet on the ground!** Don't climb on the basket
- Do not put your foot in the step hole or rope handle of basket
- Keep your feet back. Shift or bounce of basket may land it on your foot
- Don't look up! Grass or sand may fall from the envelope once it is vertical

Launch:

- Do not stand in direction of expected travel (downwind)
- "Hands only" means no weight, but still hold on for control
- "No hands," "let go," or other similar command means **let go!** Do not hold on and swing the basket, do not playfully let yourself fly a few feet then drop, do not hang on and run with the basket. **Let go!**

Pack Up:

- The balloon is gone, time to chase. Work as a team and pack up as quickly as possible
- Follow all the procedures noted above about lifting and tarps

Chase:

- **Driver** — be safe, courteous and obey traffic laws. Watch the road and let someone else navigate and communicate. If you need to talk to the pilot directly, pull over
- **Navigator** — assist the driver with turn by turn information and communication with the balloon
- **All Crew** — Whenever possible, locate and point out potential issues such as power lines to navigator so this information can be relayed to the pilot if necessary
- **In a festival/rally** setting have someone walk in front of the chase vehicle as it exits the festival grounds to make sure no one steps in front of it. Spectators are watching the balloons not the chase trucks

Landing/Recovery:

- Seek permission from property owners before entering private property
- Note any potential hazards such as power lines, hidden fence posts, ground stakes, etc. and relay to pilot
- As balloon approaches, stand to the side, not in front of the moving balloon
- Give "weight on" as instructed by the pilot. It may be necessary to move the balloon. Follow instructions and walk alongside, not in front of the moving balloon
- Follow all safety procedures for ground handling as noted above under "Launch"
- Do not run on uneven ground or on tarps
- When loading equipment, follow the procedures under "lifting." Remember, "we all know you could do it yourself, but why should you? You are a **team**, work together.

