



# Balloon Federation of America

## Pilot Achievement Award Program

2020

3<sup>rd</sup> revision (with 2001 Revisions)

This program was developed by the BFA Events Committee in 1982 for the purpose of advancing the sport of ballooning. In 1986, 1994, and again in 1999 the program was updated. This pamphlet contains the 1999 update. Revised in 2008 and 2020.

### INTRODUCTION

The sport of ballooning has continued to grow and has reached the point where both the general public and FAA take it more seriously. This interest includes not only treating us as professionals, but also increasing the amount of regulation. Not too many years ago, the majority of balloon pilots had reasonably similar experience levels. This was because modern ballooning was relatively new. However, this has changed, and we now have a much wider range of experience in our pilot population. There is a tendency among a large number of pilots to plateau in their aeronautical knowledge and skills. This occurs fairly early in the pilot's participation in the sport. This plateau is the primary reason for recurrent training and practice of skills. However, in addition to practice, the pilot must constantly increase skills and knowledge. It has been recognized that to move beyond this plateau some external motivation must be supplied. It is the purpose of the Pilot Achievement Award Program to supply this motivation by establishing a set of challenges and rewards. The challenges include specific flight and ground requirements to be attained, as well as options that allow pilots to follow individual interests. The rewards come in the form of public recognition for these achievements. The revised program has 8 levels, each building on the previous. Our intent and hope is that pilots will find this a challenging and rewarding, fun program to participate in, and will hold those who have achieved each level with respect.

### ADMINISTRATION

**Purpose:** The purpose of the Balloon Federation of America's Pilot Achievement Awards Program is to encourage pilots to increase their skills and aeronautical knowledge through a program of challenges and rewards.

Any BFA pilot or student pilot member in good standing is eligible to participate in the Pilot Achievement Awards Program.

Applications are available from the BFA office, the BFA web site, or by writing the PAAP program manager.

**Pilot Achievement Award Designee:** Any BFA director (past or present), the PAAP program manager, any FAA Designated (Balloon) Pilot Examiner (past or present), and a BFA appointed PAAP award Designee are approved PAAP award Designee's. The names of these people can be obtained from the BFA web site. In addition, any BFA recognized balloon association or club may request that the BFA PAAP manager designate one of their members as an award designee. It must be noted, ALL of these individuals have no real or implied obligation to do so except on a voluntary basis.

The burden of proof for having met the requirements of each level is solely the responsibility of the pilot applicant.

The applicant must submit all pertinent information, including logbook copies to the PAAP award designee. This person will review all material for accuracy and completeness. This person will endorse the application (if acceptable) and forward the Application to the BFA national office. The BFA office will forward the Application to the PAAP manager for final approval. The manager will notify the applicant of its acceptance or rejection. If rejected, the applicant has the right of appeal by special jury. The appeal must be made in writing to the PAAP manager within 45 days of notification of rejection.

If you have not previously participated in the PAAP program and desire to start, you do not need to apply and pay for lower levels, unless you desire to receive the certificates and pins for those levels. You must, however, submit proof that you meet all the requirements for each of the lower levels, along with your completed application for the requested level.

**Criteria Waiver Petition:** It is the intent of the program to allow some flexibility. Where a requirement cannot be met due to circumstances beyond the control of a participant, that person may petition the PAAP manager for a waiver or substitution. The applicant must submit a formal request for waiver, in writing, to the program manager. This waiver request must also be signed by the regional award designee. It is recommended that if a pilot feels that a particular requirement is not attainable, for reasons beyond their control, they contact the program manager for possible alternatives.

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Appeal Jury: The chairman of BFA Operations will appoint three persons who will serve as an appeal jury. They will examine the information provided, request additional information as necessary, and render a final decision.

Balloon Federation of America  
PO Box 400  
Indianola, IA 50125

## PILOT ACHIEVEMENT AWARD PIN

LEVEL EDGE COLOR	TITLE
Level 1 Yellow	Student Aeronaut
Level 2 Green	Basic Aeronaut
Level 3 Red	Intermediate Aeronaut
Level 4 Blue	Advanced Aeronaut
Level 5 Bronze	Senior Aeronaut
Level 6 Silver	Master Aeronaut
Level 7 Gold	Prominent Aeronaut
Level 8 Antique Gold	Distinguished Aeronaut

### LEVEL 1.

**OBJECTIVE:** To provide a recognizable identity within the sport of ballooning for the student pilot.

**RATIONALE:** There is considerable variance in the length of time it takes a student to earn their FAA LTA Private certificate. This is due, in part, to weather, access to instruction, finances and time, as well as personal motivations. Statistically, a substantial percentage of student pilots in all areas of aviation, fail to complete their training for a private license. It is hoped that this achievement award will encourage the student pilot to complete their training.

- |                                 |                           |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| o <b>Prior Achievement</b>      | None                      |
| o <b>Certificate Required</b>   | Student                   |
| o <b>Hours/Flights Required</b> | 5/5                       |
| o <b>Flight Activities</b>      | n/a                       |
| o <b>Knowledge</b>              | Passed private written    |
| o <b>Validation Required</b>    | Endorsement by instructor |
- Cost \$10.00

### LEVEL 2.

**OBJECTIVE:** To provide recognizable identity within the sport of ballooning for the newly certified private pilot.

**RATIONALE:** The attainment of an FAA Private Pilots Certificate is a point of pride and high enthusiasm for the new pilot. This milestone, however, is frequently referred to in the aviation community as a 'license to learn'. New pilots strive for identity within the sport and require time to reinforce skills.

- |                                 |                                  |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| o <b>Prior Achievement</b>      | Level 1                          |
| o <b>Certificate Required</b>   | Private LTA                      |
| o <b>Hours/Flights Required</b> | 25/25                            |
| o <b>Flight Activities</b>      | n/a                              |
| o <b>Knowledge</b>              | BFA approved Educational Seminar |
| o <b>Validation Required</b>    | Copy of FAA certificate          |
- Cost \$10.00

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## LEVEL 3.

**OBJECTIVE:** To motivate the new private pilot to continue to upgrade their flying skills and promote reinforcement of learned skills.

**RATIONALE:** The private pilot has gained the privilege of flying passengers. This privilege carries with it the burden of making critical decisions which will ensure the level demonstrates to others that this pilot has taken the privilege seriously and will continue to grow.

- o **Prior Achievement** Level 2
- o **Certificate Required** Private LTA
- o **Hours/Flights** 50/40
- o **Flight Activities** 3 flights in unfamiliar area **and** ascent to 5,000 AGL
- o **Knowledge** BFA Educational Seminar since level 2 **or** passed LTA Commercial written exam
- o **Validation Required** BFA PAAP award designee
- Cost \$10.00

## LEVEL 4.

**OBJECTIVE:** To encourage the private pilot to make a decision on the type of flying they will do, competitive, instruction, commercial, or combinations, and assist them in achieving that goal.

**RATIONALE:** As the private pilot gains confidence through flying and is afforded the opportunity to expand in the sport, they must decide on the type of flying they will do. This level requires the pilot to choose from several options and make a choice on flying style.

- o **Prior Achievement** Level 3
- o **Certificate Required** Private LTA
- o **Hours/Flights** 100/90
- o **Flight Activities** 3 high density flights **and ascent** to 10,000 MSL **and** 2 hours dual with instructor **and** Track A: 5 BFA competitive tasks Track B: flight over 35 miles **and** flight of 1.5hours (separate flights)
- o **Knowledge:** One hour of ground instruction **and** BFA Educational Seminar since level 3 or Passed Fundamentals of instruction.
- o **Validation Required** BFA PAAP award designee

- Cost \$10.00

## LEVEL 5.

**OBJECTIVE:** To encourage the private pilot to upgrade to a higher FAA balloon certificate.

**RATIONALE:** Earning the FAA Commercial Rating is a noteworthy accomplishment. A significant increase in pilot responsibility goes along with this increase in privileges.

- o **Prior Achievement** Level 4
- o **Certificate Required** Commercial LTA
- o **Hours/Flights** 175/150
- o **Flight Activities** 2 hours dual time with instructor **and** flight  $\geq$  2 hours **and** fly a prepared flight plan of at least 1 hr with an observer that includes flight maneuvers requiring precise control of the balloon **and** Track A: 10 additional BFA tasks (15 total) Track B: BFA Long Jump over 75 miles Track C: 1 student through private
- o **Knowledge** One-hour ground instruction **and** BFA Educational Seminar since level 4
- o **Validation Required** BFA PAAP award designee
- Cost \$10.00

## LEVEL 6

**OBJECTIVE:** To encourage the commercial pilot to Increase their skills and knowledge of the sport.

**RATIONALE:** The newly certified pilot is now in the balloon business. This person must be more aware of the technical aspects of the sport and also be more aware of what can be done in the sport. This person is also the future of the education and safety of the sport.

- o **Prior Achievement** Level 5
- o **Certificate Required** Commercial LTA
- o **Hours/Flights:** 300/250

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- o **Flight Activities:** 2 hours dual with instructor since level 5 **and**  
Track A: 25 total BFA tasks **or** 15 total tasks and top 10 finish in major BFA race  
Track B: flight using oxygen **or** night flight  
Track C: 4 students through private or commercial  
Track D: combinations A-15, C-2
- o **Knowledge** One hour ground instruction and BFA Educational Seminar since level 5 **and** official in BFA rally or club board member
- Validation Required:** BFA PAAP award designee

- Cost \$15.00

## LEVEL 7

**OBJECTIVE:** To recognize those pilots whose knowledge and experience is considerably above the majority of pilots, and to encourage them to share this experience.

**RATIONALE:** The pilot who has reached this level of experience and knowledge has the ability to contribute much to the growth and safety of the sport.

- o **Prior Achievement** Level 6
- o **Certificate Required** Commercial LTA
- o **Hours/Flights** 500/400
- o **Flight Activities** 2 hours dual with instructor since level 6 **and**  
Track A: 40 total BFA tasks **or** top 5 in a major BFA race since level 6  
Track B: flight using oxygen **or** night flight (different from level 6)  
Track C: 8 students through private or commercial  
Track D: combinations A-25, C-4
- o **Knowledge:** One hour ground instruction **and** official at BFA rally **or** club board member **or** instructor at BFA approved Educational Seminar since level 6
- o **Validation Required** BFA PAAP designee

- Cost \$15.00

## LEVEL 8

**OBJECTIVE:** To encourage the veteran pilot to review skills and pass knowledge on to newer pilots. This pilot should be looked upon as a wealth of knowledge and experience and should be encouraged to pass this knowledge on.

**RATIONALE:** The veteran balloonist is an invaluable source of information to the newer pilots. This person should be encouraged to share this information and should feel honored to be asked. The attainment of the goals required for this level are not to be taken lightly and require significant contribution to the sport.

- o **Prior Achievement** Level 7
- o **Certificate Required** Commercial LTA
- o **Hours/Flights** 700/600
- o **Flight Activities** 2 hours dual time with instructor since level 7 **and** Track A: 60 total BFA tasks **or** top 3 in major BFA race since level 7  
Track B: obtained additional FAA rating  
Track C: 12 students through private or commercial  
Track D: combinations A-35, C-8
- o **Knowledge** One-hour ground instruction **and** BFA Educational Seminar since level 7 **and** Instructor at BFA Educational Seminar **and** Published **or** Balloonmeister at 2 BFA rallies **or** Significant other contribution/event to be determined by committee  
BFA PAAP designee
- o **Validation Required**

- Cost \$15.00

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## Appendix

**Instructor:** The required instructor must be rated for category and class

**2 hours dual with instructor:** This review must cover those maneuvers and procedures that are necessary for the pilot to demonstrate the safe exercise of the privileges of the biennial flight review (FAR 61.56 (a) (2)). The following maneuvers are required: precision approaches, touch and go, landing in congested area, relighting pilot light, simulated high wind/short field landing and other emergency procedures deemed necessary by the instructor.

**One Hour Ground Instruction:** The required ground instruction must include coverage of pertinent sections of FAR 91 and is intended to be capable of qualifying for a biennial flight review (FAR 61.56 (a) (1)). This requirement must be noted by the instructor in the applicant's logbook and a photocopy provided. Required topics include fuel management, refueling, inflation procedures, review of flight manual, and weather check.

**AND:** The and term is exclusive, meaning that particular requirement cannot be combined with any other requirement on that level or any other level.

**Flight in Unfamiliar Geographic Area (LEVEL 3):** Flying conditions vary considerably throughout the country. The challenge of flight in an unfamiliar area can be significant. The intent of this provision is for the pilot to fly in an area of significantly different flying conditions (weather and terrain) that require an increase in flight awareness.

**High Density Flight Situations (LEVEL 4):** Many pilots prefer to fly in relative isolation and avoid the more intense activity of a rally or competitive race. The launching and maneuvering of a balloon in close proximity to other balloons adds several new factors for a pilot to deal with. The result of this experience is a broadening of pilot knowledge, skills and confidence. **The definition of high density for this requirement is 30 balloons. This requirement can be combined with the Track A requirement of 5 competitive tasks.**

**BFA Approved Educational Seminar:** This must include at least 7 hours of basic with a recommended additional 4 hours enrichment.

**Competition in Major Race:** The intent of this provision is for a pilot to have a high overall ranking in an event of several days' duration, thereby showing consistent flight skills. This event must have included at least 5 flights at least two of which were multiple tasks flights, and 8 total tasks. There also must be at least 50 balloons involved. Examples include the Nationals and AIBF, and others events that qualify, including international competition.

**BFA Competitive Tasks:** All Track A tasks must be sanctioned BFA competition committee tasks.

**Race/Rally Official (LEVELS 6, 7):** Participation as an official at an organized race/rally presents the pilot with a different perspective on ballooning and requires organization that can be applied to flying. The intent of this requirement is that the official be very closely involved in the flying events, such as but not limited to balloonmeister, safety officer, head launch director. This event must involve at least 30 balloons and 3 or more flights.

**Instructor at BFA Educational Seminar (LEVEL 8):** There is sufficient time between level 7 and level 8 (200hrs/200flights) that this requirement can be met separately from the required attendance at an Educational seminar, unless the applicant attends and presents at 2 Educational seminars.

**Night Flight:** A flight requiring the use of aircraft lights, i.e. commencing 30 minutes to 1 hour before astronomical sunrise.

**Flight Using Oxygen:** The intent of this option is to familiarize the pilot with the use of oxygen. It does not require that the applicant fly at altitudes that require oxygen.

**Flight Plan Requirement (LEVEL 5):** Flight planning is strongly recommended by the FAA for all types of flying. In some parts of the country flight planning is necessary to avoid certain airspace or fly to landing sites. The emphasis is placed on a pilot's ability to plan a flight and to deal with in-flight variables as they occur. The applicant must be able to:

- Interpret meteorological information
- Precisely calculate a ground track
- Establish a destination point
- Prepare a flight plan which specifies a series of maneuvers in sequence so as to land at the established designation and estimate flight duration and fuel
- Demonstrate piloting ability to follow the prepared plan

The examining pilot (commercial rating or instructor) is requested to hold a preflight discussion and post flight review with the applicant. The overall evaluation of the applicant's success is left to the judgment of the evaluating check pilot.

Some criteria to be considered are:

- Did the applicant understand the flight planning process
- Was the flight plan reasonable for the prevailing and forecast conditions
- Were the maneuvers suitable to challenge the applicant

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- Could the applicant control the balloon as to carry out the intended flight plan
- Did the applicant recognize in-flight variables and make necessary corrections to correct for these variables
- Was the landing reasonably close to the planned destination and if not, was this due to circumstances that could not be foreseen by the applicant

### SAMPLE FLIGHT PLAN

Date of Flight: 4 Feb 2021	Balloon: Lindstrand AX8 N899LB
Pilot: Shane Addison	Check Pilot: Naomi Adams
Launch Site: A School	Destination: State Park
Est Launch Time: 0645 EDT	Est Time Enroute: 75 min
Fuel on board: 30 gal	Est fuel required: 16 gal

Weather SA: 150-sc 15 miles 70/63/210/7/3001  
 Weather FT: 150-sc 215/9 till 1000EDT  
 Weather FDLO: 3000 220/10 6000 225/12 9000 240/15

	Ea Maneuver (min)	Cumulative
A. Launch	0	0
B. Climb @ 200fpm to 1000AGL	5	5
C. Level for 5 min	5	10
D. Climb @ 300 fpm to 2500 AGL	5	15
E. Level for 3 min	3	18
F. Descend @ 500fpm to 150 AGL	5	23
G. Contour fly near ground	10	33
H. Climb @ 250 fpm to 1500 AGL	6	39
I. Fly level for 12 min ±50 ft	12	51
J. Descent to potential landing	7	58
K. Climb @ 300 fpm to 1500 AGL	5	63
L. Level flight for 5 min	5	68
M. Approach for final landing	7	75

**Validation Required (ALL LEVELS):** Validation for specific flights such as; unfamiliar area (3), high density (4), altitude (3,4), etc will require a photo copy of the applicant's logbook showing date, location, and hours logged.

**Validation for dual instruction (flight) and Ground Instruction** will require photocopy of applicants logbook showing date, location, hours logged and endorsement by instructor(s) giving the check ride (same instructor for both hours) and providing the ground instruction (can be a different instructor).

**Validation for BFA tasks (track B)** will require a copy of applicant's, logbook, location of flight, points scored, and name of competition official. This competition must be registered with the BFA committee division.

**Validation for Planned Flight (LEVEL 5).** A sample copy of the required information is included. A copy of the planned and actual flight must be included. This must be signed by the observing pilot.

**Validation for BFA Long Jump (5 Track B)** will require photocopy of applicant's logbook showing date, departure and arrival sites, and hours logged. This flight must be registered with the BFA Long Jump manager.

**Validation for Student Instruction (5-8 Track C)** will require photocopies of students' logbooks showing instructor sign off for exam and FAA designated examiners sign off of successful completion

**Validation for Additional FAA rating (8 Track B)** will require photocopy of applicant's logbook showing FAA Designated Examiner's sign off of successful completion and photocopy of FAA license with additional rating.

**Validation of Attendance at BFA approved Educational Seminar** will require a statement as to location and dates. This seminar must be registered with the BFA.

**Validation of term as Club Board Member or Race Official** will require dates of term and proof. Example: from at least 2 other club board members. Date of race and signed statement from event organizer is required for race official requirement.

**Validation of Instructor at BFA Approved Educational Seminar** will require proof of attendance from the organization sponsoring the Educational Seminar .

### PILOT ACHIEVEMENT AWARD PROGRAM FEES (Effective 1/1/2000)

Level 1	\$10.00
Level 2	\$10.00
Level 3	\$10.00
Level 4	\$10.00
Level 5	\$10.00
Level 6	\$15.00
Level 7	\$15.00
Level 8	\$15.00