

The Quick Release

Published Monthly

Issue No. 3
March 2021



2021 BFA Youth Camps

High Sierra Balloon Camp
Reno, NV - June 20-25, 2021

Southeastern Balloon Camp
Gaffney, SC - June 22-27, 2021

Rio Grande Balloon Camp
Albuquerque, NM - July 10-15, 2021

For more information:
<https://bfa.net/bfa-summer-camps>

The BFA Youth Program Junior Balloonist Camps have always been successful because of the generosity of the balloon community with their time and their donations. We are planning the 2021 camps with optimism but need help to make these happen. Monetary donations can be made in small or large amounts at www.bfa.net/donate or by contacting Katie Griggs at katiegriggs1ta@gmail.com or Jill Jacobson in the BFA office at bfaoffice@bfa.net. We also need a variety of items donated. If you are interested in sponsoring any of the items, please contact Katie Griggs.

Thank you very much for your generosity!



2021 BFA Online Safety Seminar

APRIL 1ST Registration

If you have not taken the 2020 seminar it is available until the end of April, when the 2021 seminar becomes available.

[2020 Video Seminar Registration - Balloon Federation of America \(bfa.net\)](http://www.bfa.net)

Medications, Medicals and Ballooning According to the FARs

By Dave Bair

In recent years there has been a lot of conversations about whether medical certificates will be required in ballooning, or if they should be. Rather than wading into that debate, I would like to talk about how balloon pilots might consider their health and medications, whether they carry a medical or not.

I have heard balloonists regard the lack of a medical requirement in FAR 61.23 to mean there are no requirements at all on their health. I disagree with that wholeheartedly. I believe that ballooning can demand higher degrees of health than other aviation activities, such as constant concentration for the duration of the flight, spotting flight obstacles like powerlines and fences, potentially heavy lifting or pulling, and the occasional hard landing.

Let's dig into this discussion with a Q&A style

Q: Why are some balloon pilots required to carry a medical and some are not?

A: According to the FARs, ballooning does not require a medical certificate at any time. However, some ride companies add it as a condition of employment. For example, the ride company I fly with has required me to carry a 2nd class medical certificate for several years now.

Q: If I carry a medical certificate, do I have to comply with all the rules in 61.53(a) regarding medical conditions, treatments, and medications when I fly my balloon?

A: This one is a bit tricky, and I feel strongly both ways.

- In one sense, yes. In order to get a medical certificate, you must be fully honest and transparent about any medical conditions, procedures, and medications that are relevant to the exam. Failure to do so would be considered falsifying information and could result in the revocation of the medical certificate and possibly the pilot certificate.
- On the other hand, no. It clearly separates based on the "operations" requiring a medical certificate or not, and ballooning is exempted from that requirement in 61.23(b)(3). Therefore, if I got the medical certificate honestly, but recently took an "unapproved" medication and still felt fine to fly based on my own standards, the balloon flight could potentially be legal since it is an operation that does not require a medical certificate. While this flight might technically be legal, also think about having to justify your decision if there was any kind of incident.

Q: Since we fly balloons, do our medical status and medications matter at all?

A: In a word, yes, they do matter. In FAR 91.17(a), we often refer to the alcohol rules and skip right over paragraph (3) regarding drugs, but that does apply to us. In addition, 61.53(b) states we can't fly with any condition that might prevent safe flight. Combining those two rules suggests to us that we need enough health to fly safely, and we cannot consume drugs that might compromise our faculties.

Q: If I don't carry a medical certificate, how can I know which medications are allowed?

A: Technically, the FAA does not publish a list of "allowed medications." However, there is an online resource from the FAA that comments on which medications should not be approved by a medical examiner (link below). In addition, some medications are fine to take but have a time limit before flight similar to alcohol rules. If the FAA has commonly disallowed certain medication, it is likely they would also consider that medication to fall within the 91.17(a)(3) category of affecting faculties.

Q: Should a pilot's health and/or medication be covered as part of a flight review?

A: The FARs are relatively quiet about this, and I believe it should be covered. FAR 61.56 discusses flight reviews and states that all procedures required for safe flight should be covered. This can be an uncomfortable subject to discuss, but it could be a deciding factor if a pilot is truly safe to fly. Because balloon pilots are not legally required to carry a medical certificate, it could be argued that the flight review is the only place where the fitness to fly is truly examined.

My suggestion is to take the time to evaluate your fitness for flying based on the standards of a medical certificate. This would include areas like vision, hearing, balance, or cardio-pulmonary concerns. Likewise, we can evaluate the drugs we take based on the recommendations of the FAA and determine if we are operating with full faculties or if we are compromised at all. In a very practical sense, we should also consider our physical fitness with regard to strength, durability, and response time. If you have reason to believe you could not pass an FAA medical exam, then extra scrutiny is required to determine if you are really fit to fly.

Medications and Ballooning According to the FARs continued

By Dave Bair

References:

§ 91.17 Alcohol or drugs.

(a) No person may act or attempt to act as a crewmember of a civil aircraft -

(3) While using any drug that affects the person's faculties in any way contrary to safety; or

§ 61.53 Prohibition on operations during medical deficiency.

(a) Operations that require a medical certificate. Except as provided for in paragraph (b) of this section, no person who holds a medical certificate issued under part 67 of this chapter may act as pilot in command, or in any other capacity as a required pilot flight crewmember, while that person:

(1) Knows or has reason to know of any medical condition that would make the person unable to meet the requirements for the medical certificate necessary for the pilot operation; or

(2) Is taking medication or receiving other treatment for a medical condition that results in the person being unable to meet the requirements for the medical certificate necessary for the pilot operation.

(b) Operations that do not require a medical certificate. For operations provided for in § 61.23(b) of this part, a person shall not act as pilot in command, or in any other capacity as a required pilot flight crewmember, while that person knows or has reason to know of any medical condition that would make the person unable to operate the aircraft in a safe manner.

Medication Database

<https://www.aviationmedicine.com/medication-database/>

https://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/avs/offices/aam/ame/guide/pharm/

<https://www.aopa.org/go-fly/medical-resources/search-faa-medication-database>

Standards for Medical Certificates

https://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/avs/offices/aam/ame/guide/standards/



All Photos taken in Cordele, GA

Photo Credits:

Top Left: Joann Charleton

Top Right & Bottom:

Jessica Warren



WELCOME NEW BFA MEMBERS



Lee Emerick
Rebecca Williams
Kyle Buckles
Ryan Riddell
Randy Kirgiss
Youseff Frouad
Kevin Osborne
Joyce Quilliams

Whitestown, IN
Longmont, CO
Williamson, NY
Goshen, KY
Johnson City, TN
Clovis, NM
Peoria, AZ
Henderson, NV

Shawn Speicher
John Clement
Wendy Funderburg
Britan Stepanek
Meridian Johnson
Jennifer Davis
Gary Davalos
Robert LeDoux

Albuquerque, NM
St Cloud, MN
Cumming, GA
 Mooresville, NC
Los Alamos, NM
Carrollton, TX
Phoenix, AZ
Jefferson, OR



The National Balloon Museum is OPEN!
Hours of Wednesday-Sunday 1:00-4:00

US Ballooning Hall of Fame
Will be celebrated on Sunday, August 1, 2021
Noon to 3:00.

2020 Inductees
Mark Sullivan and Coy Foster
2021 Inductees
Bert Padelt, Richard Jaworski, and Julian Nott

Come help us honor these Ballooning Pioneers!!

A FAR Question

Question: What is the fuel requirement for flight in VFR daytime conditions?

Hint: 91.151

(Look for answer in April 2021 issue)

LAST MONTHS QUIZ & ANSWER

Question: What are the minimum hours of flight time required for a pilot to apply for a Commercial LTA certificate?

Answer: 61.129(h) 35 hours



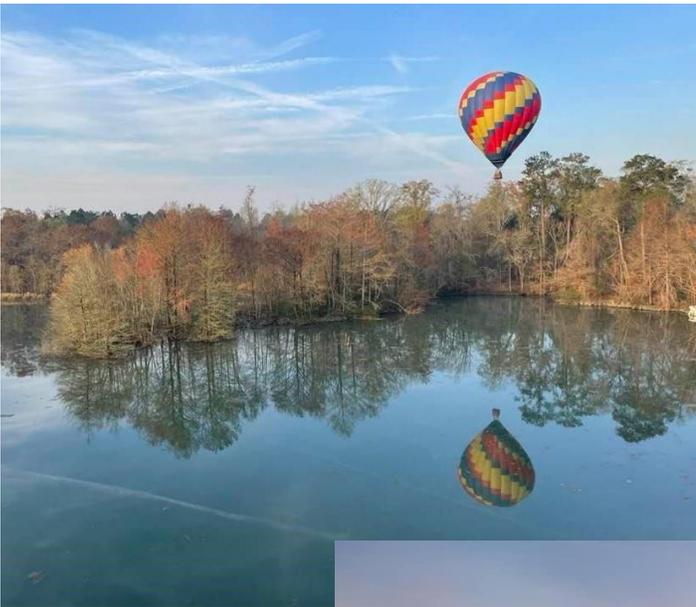
Crew Achievement Award Program

Laura Cusick

II Crew Level

OH

For more information in participating in the PAAP or the CAAP please go to: www.bfa.net under the education tab.



All Photos taken in
Cordele, GA

Photo Credit:
Top Left: Kay West
Top Right & Bottom:
Jessica Warren



Balloon Federation Of America

BFA Office Manager
Jill Jacobsen
P.O. Box 400
Indianola, IA 50125
(515) 961-8809
EMAIL bfaoffice@bfa.net
Website www.bfa.net

BFA Quick Release
Tamie Shrum, Editor
EMAIL tamieshrum5@gmail.com
(970) 420-4109