



European Ballooning Federation

A Safe working environment for Commercial Passenger Ballooning:

Keep the Sars CoV 2 virus out and prevent Covid 19!

It is important to realise that there is a big difference in the way in which CPB is treated in different states in Europe. Some countries have no protocol and no limitations others have strict Protocols and limitations to 2 POB.

A restart of the activities is important for ballooning for two primary reasons:

1. Economic interest. Balloon companies have high financial obligations. Owning and financing a balloon is a huge budget item in addition to personnel costs. The operators are now unable to earn their daily living with ballooning. They are also not eligible for government funding. If money cannot be made in a responsible manner, some of these companies will be in serious trouble.
2. Pilot currency. Currency (recent experience) is a particularly important part of safety in ballooning. Every 180 days, each pilot must take off, approach and land 3 times to stay current, every 24 months a pilot must fly with an FI or FE, and every 24 months refresher training should be followed.

Ballooning in the Europe is working towards a phased and responsible approach toward the restart of Commercial Passenger Ballooning (CPB) activities.

In addition to measures such as keeping a distance of 1.5 meters and avoiding physical contact, the balloon operator will base each new step on the applicable advice from the government and other National authorities. The goal is to make sure that employees, crew and pilots, as well as passengers, are aware of the measures referred to in the guidelines and this document.

The National Health Services and NAA rules and regulations are strictly observed:

- Wash your hands before and after each activity with soap and water.
- Cough and sneeze in the inside of your elbow.
- Use tissue paper to blow your nose and then throw the tissue away.
- Do not shake hands.
- Keep 1.5 meters (2 arm lengths) from others.
- Work at home as much as possible.

If you have one or more of the following complaints, you must stay at home:

- Cold complaints such as colds, runny nose, sneezing, sore throat, cough
- Shortness of breath
- Increase or fever (over 38 Celcius)
- Sudden loss of smell and / or taste (without nasal congestion)

New insights will gradually emerge and new (protective) products will become available. If these can also be used before or during a balloon flight (in particular during the flight), those insights and products will, if necessary and / or desired, may lead to changes to this protocol.

Distinctive features of ballooning:

The (commercial) ballooning in Europe has after the outbreak of COVID-19 and the measures taken by the government come to a complete standstill. The easing of the measures in May gave some room to restart somewhat but limited to 2 POB (Persons on board) in most countries. This means that CPB is still largely grounded in most states.

However, the second series of relaxations in June may offer some more room for a (limited) restart.

3. A balloon flight takes place outdoors.

Commercial Passenger Ballooning is in some respects different from other recreational activities:

- Ballooning takes place outdoors.
- The balloon flight takes place in a highly regulated environment. Organizations within the balloon flight are usually certified (the balloon flight is regulated by EASA (European Union Aviation Safety Agency) including EU Part BOP. (Balloon Operations) and Part BFCL (Balloon Flight Crew Licensing) and are supervised by National Aviation Authorities.
- The balloon pilots are expected to read the NOTAM (Notice To Airmen) before every flight in the context of the flight preparation; government restrictions, which are related to COVID-19, among others, are reflected in the NOTAM and must be followed;
- Within the balloon community there is a professional culture in which it is customary to hold each other accountable for compliance with rules. Keeping a distance of 1.5 meters is certainly part of this;
- Airmen are periodically medically examined. It concerns a group that is fit (healthy) from a flying medical point of view and who is in principle inactive in the event of illness ("unfit to fly");

Significance of the “1.5 meter society” for balloon flight.

During the balloon flight it is not possible to keep a distance of 1.5 meters whilst flying with more than one person. See in this regard the sub-protocols as described below.

On the ground, the 1.5 meter rule is easy to implement. Think of activities such as: flight preparation, theory lessons, briefings, administrative actions, ground handling and maintenance.

The risk of spreading the Sars CoV 2 virus, because the ballooning takes place in the open air, is relatively limited compared to a closed cabin.

The hygiene measures (as further described here)are strictly observed;.

- Completing the health questions described here is essential for whether to take passengers with you. (see questionnaire below)
- The 1.5-meter distance is maintained before take-off and after landing.
- Only 75% of the maximum permitted weight (MTOM) is allowed in the basket, 75% of the maximum number of passengers. We suggest this to maximize the distance between the passengers.
- Wearing face masks is recommended in the basket for pilot and passengers, (FI) instructors and (FE) examiners, although this is not mandatory under current National regulations but is recommended for CPB.
- The Operator must inform the passengers of the correct use of mouth protection and other measures.

It is not always possible to keep a distance of 1.5 meters in the air. At this point, the balloon flight can be compared to the contact professions. The people in these professions must of course work as safely as possible, and the same applies to the passengers and crew during a balloon flight.

Hygiene measures and a health check are the basis

To ensure that pilot or crew / employee, can work safely and that passengers can enjoy the balloon ride safely, it is essential that you follow the advice below and communicate these to other participants.

- It is now necessary to do a health check on yourself and your passengers. By a health check, we mean that before entering the service, you always check whether you are healthy and whether the crew and passengers have no complaints that are appropriate for the new corona virus.

• Before making an appointment with a passenger or crew, you should ask them a number of questions (see the questions below) at the day of the flight.

- If one of these questions is answered yes, do not make an appointment, or cancel the appointment.

Questions for the health check:

If one of the questions below is answered with YES, the pilot or crew or passenger may not participate in the balloon flight and is not welcome at the starting area. The balloon flight must be postponed for this participant until all questions are answered with NO!

- Have you had in the past 24 hours or do you currently have one or more of the following complaints:

1. Nose cold, cough, runny nose, sneezing, sore throat, tightness and or fever above 38 degrees Celsius, sudden loss of smell or taste (without nasal congestion)?

2. Do you or a family member currently having a fever and / or shortness of breath?

3. Did you have the new Coronavirus diagnosed in the past 7 days by a laboratory test?

4. Do you have a roommate / family member living with you, with the new Coronavirus diagnosed by a laboratory test and have you had contact with it in the past 14 days while he / she still had complaints?

5. Are you quarantined because you have had direct contact with someone who has been diagnosed with the Corona virus?

- If, as an employee, you have health problems such as the common cold, cough, fever and / or shortness of breath, you will stay at home and you will not be able to work. If you develop complaints during the working day, you stop working and go straight home.

- If you, as an employee, belong to one of the risk groups, consider whether it is medically justified that you can work. In consultation with the company doctor, it must be considered whether and which activities can be carried out and you must be given the opportunity not to resume work / to start other activities.

Cleaning and disinfecting:

Flight preparation

- Basket edges and other contact surfaces must be cleaned and disinfected before every trip,
- The passenger / student and or pilot / instructor will fill out a health declaration before the start of the flight.
- The passenger / student is instructed in advance of what is expected of them and which rules and regulations they have to follow,
- Rules of conduct for the passenger / student with regard to COVID-19 are on the website and will be presented to the passenger / student or sent by email. The COVID-19 hygiene poster is shown available at the launch site.
- The passenger / student comes to the launch site using her/his own transport.
- Check-in should be as contactless as possible.

At the launch site:

- The passenger / student and pilot / instructor disinfect his / her hands on arrival. A dispenser is available on site for this. The 1.5 meter distance limitation is always observed on the launch field.
- When bystanders are present on the launch field, they are informed that they must also observe the 1.5 meter distance limitation.
- The operator provides sufficient crew.

During the flight

- The passenger / pupil should face the outside of the basket as much as possible
- To create space between the pilot and the passengers, only 75% of the balloon's capacity (MTOM) is used.

After the flight

- The passenger / student leaves the landing site after disinfecting his / her hands.
- The operator provides sufficient crew to minimise involvement from passengers,
- When approaching the landowner, we apply the rules of 1.5 meters protocol. (do not shake hands and keep a distance)
- In all encounters, we observe the 1.5-meter distance limitation.

Suggested Measures:

- Make fixed walking routes to and from the basket,
- Dispose of disposable items and materials in a safe manner after use.
- Ensure that people who wear non-medical masks follow the applicable instructions for use.

Additional measures.

We have made guidelines for the operator, crew and passengers as written in this Protocol. In addition to these, there could be specific COVID-19 measures, and perhaps stricter regulations and quality standards or legislation published by the NAA of other Governmental bodies. These existing guidelines will of course continue to apply.

Measures:

- All balloon rides are by appointment only,
- All participants will receive hygiene measures and health questions and instructions before flying.
- All passengers are instructed not to come to launch field with health complaints.
- Indicate to the passengers that they should come to the launch site alone.
- Indicate that the trip will take about 1 hour and that as much distance as possible from other passengers should be maintained.
- Ensure that there is ample opportunity for all participants to wash or disinfect their hands before the flight.
- Don't shake hands.
- Keep a distance of 1.5 meters to other people before and after the trip.

Limit the number of passengers and crew present on the launch site:

- In order to ensure the maximum possible distance between the passengers also during navigation, the basket is only loaded for 75% of the maximum capacity (MTOM).
- The number of people present at the starting location must be as small as possible. Bystanders should be made aware of the generally applicable hygiene regulations.

Suggested measures:

- Ballooning takes place outdoors.
- The basket contains a constant airflow caused by the burners and the ambient airflows.
- Passengers should wait in their own car or wait 1.5 meters away from others if they must wait before and after the flight.

Prevent contamination:

- Make sure that everything has been done to prevent the pilot and crew to be contaminated by the passengers and that the passengers do not become mutually contaminated nor contaminated by pilot and or crew.

• Suggestions for measures people with high risc:

- A crew member or a pilot belonging to the risk group must decide whether working or participating in the activity is justified. If necessary, a company

doctor or general practitioner can assist with this decision. If possible, the pilot or crew member can be assigned other activities where the risk is less.

- The starting point is the health check for the crew and the pilot, which is the same as for the passengers.

- Persons belonging to the risk group must be made aware of the risks and the consideration of whether to participate in the balloon flight.

- The usual hygiene and infection protocols are always leading

- We recommend pilots, crew and passengers to wear non-medical masks.

Anyone wearing this protection should be aware of the instructions for use.