

S o n o m a C o u n t y
Hot Air
BALLOON
C l a s s i c



CREW
TIPS

Welcome to the Sonoma County Hot Air Balloon Classic. In order to ensure that we all have a safe and enjoyable experience, here are a few important crew tips.

CLOTHING

- Do not wear loose clothing or clothing with draw-strings, as these can get tangled in ropes or caught up in inflator fans.
- Long hair should be tied back (see above)..
- Wear a long sleeve cotton shirt and a cotton or wool jacket. Layers of clothing can be removed as the day warms up.
- Do not wear synthetic (nylon) outer garments as they can create static electricity.
- Wear comfortable (flat) sturdy shoes with good traction.
- Always wear leather gloves when handling balloon equipment.

ON THE FIELD

- Even though you may have crewed before every pilot has his/her own way of doing things. Wait for direction.
- Watch and listen for the pilot and/or the crew chief to give instructions because things could change at any time.
- Try to keep people from walking/stepping on ropes and balloon fabric.
- Handle balloon fabric by the load tapes.
- **NEVER** wrap ropes around your hand or other body parts.
- Smoking is not permitted on the launch field.
- Please leave small children and pets at home or bring someone with you to watch them while you are crewing.

LAUNCHING THE BALLOON

- Listen to the pilot and obey his/her instructions.
- Never stand directly in the balloon's flight path.
- Never hang onto the sides of the basket after the pilot says, "weight off," and the balloon begins rising.
- Secure all equipment in the chase vehicle before leaving the launch site. Do not leave litter on the field.
- If you will be driving the chase vehicle make sure you have access to the chase vehicle keys BEFORE the balloon launches.
- If the launch site is congested with onlookers have someone walk ahead of the chase vehicle to clear the immediate path for leaving the field.

THE CHASE

- Know the balloon you are chasing. A photo and pilot information should be provided.
- California law prohibits riding in the open bed of trucks .All passengers must be inside and seatbelted.
- Keep your eyes on the road if you're driving. Rely on other crewmembers to keep an eye on the balloon and to give you directions.
- Have a crewmember be in charge of radio communications. Let the pilot initiate communications. Keep transmissions to a minimum, and flight related.
- Drive on roads parallel to, and slightly ahead of the balloon's flight path.

LANDOWNER RELATIONS

- Good landowner relations are essential to the future of ballooning. It is important that you make the landowner's experience a positive one. It is a courtesy to remove your sunglasses when making initial contact with the landowner.
- If at all possible, obtain permission to land prior to landing. Before driving onto private property have a crewmamber get permission from the landowner/tenant.

- Keep spectators out of the area unless the landowner is present and has given them permission to enter.
- Be aware of and respect any pets or livestock.
- Make sure that fences and gates are left as you found them. **DO NOT** cut fences or force locks. to gain access to a balloon
- Check the area for litter and take it with you.
- If a dispute with the landowner does arise, be calm and exchange names, addresses, and phone numbers. Report the incident to the pilot as soon as possible.