

**Docket No. SA-539**

**Exhibit No. 1-P**

**NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD**

**Washington, D.C.**

BFA Action Plan – post-accident

(5 Pages)



## Balloon Federation of America

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# 2016 BFA/FAA Action Plan

The Balloon Federation of America (BFA) has a strong safety culture and a history of producing safety seminars and safety training materials, in addition to a variety of pilot and crew proficiency activities.

In the last few years the BFA has, through its Professional Ride Operator's Division (PRO), developed a suite of Best Practices designed to establish a common operational foundation for all major ride operators.

Operating conditions and safety parameters vary from one flying environment to another. Therefore, the PRO Best Practices (also referred to as PRO Guidelines) attempt to establish a demonstrable safety culture within each balloon ride organization, rather than create rigid thresholds that might encourage flying behaviors that are inappropriate for some environments.

These best practices have been summarized here. The full text, although previously provided, will need to be adapted in order to (a) to fit with the 'Circle of Safety' concept discussed at the FAA meeting in Washington, (b) incorporate lessons learned from the accident in TX, (c) move non-safety-related content to separate documents.

In the following action plan we have outlined 16 important steps in creating a stronger, more widespread, and documentable safety culture within the balloon ride industry. Key parts of this plan are a much closer alliance between industry and the FAA, a comprehensive education program for operators, an awareness program for the general public, and the adoption of best practices including a well-defined operations manual.

## Action Plan

### Short Term Goals – Now through 30 days

1. Industry Best Practices document – An updated summary of the document provided to the FAA during the Call to Action meeting in Washington DC on Friday, August 12 is attached. This summary

outline of the PRO Best Practices will be a prelude to a full review of this document with the goal to modify/update its guidelines to consider the current situation. Most board members agree that prior to submitting the final document for the FAA's review and acceptance there are sections that will need modification. The PRO Best Practices is a living document that will be periodically reviewed for consistency and consideration of future changes within the balloon ride community.

2. Insurance Company Involvement – The BFA and PRO division will communicate with all known insurers of hot air balloons to ask for their endorsement and acceptance of the PRO Best Practices. The BFA recognizes the influence that the insurance companies have over their insured and we will ask that they adopt these practices as insurance requirements or at the least provide an attractive discount to balloonists for compliance.
3. Member Communication – The BFA and PRO division will begin to communicate to its members to carry the message to the entire ballooning community from the BFA and FAA workgroup regarding the FAA's desire to continue to promote a Compliance Philosophy approach to both the sport and the business of ballooning. This communication will contain wording that reflects the tone and intent of the meeting on August 12<sup>th</sup> and the goals developed by the working committee promoting an increased focus on our safety culture.
4. Begin to identify those commercial operators that are not a member of BFA or the PRO division.
5. Reach out to all BFA members, PRO members and Balloon Clubs to emphasize the opportunity to work from within the community to establish standards and compliance.
6. Working Committee – A working committee has already been established and is made up of members of both BFA and PRO board members. The work of this committee is to manage the overall development of safety program structure and to report to the FAA on progress on a timely basis. In the beginning it is recommended that representative members of this committee have direct contact with Flight Standards to continue to report and measure progress. This will allow the FAA to keep both the public and Congress informed as to the action being taken by the FAA and industry to create both a better compliance based attitude throughout the ballooning community and to repair the public's perception of the safety of the balloon ride business.

#### Intermediate Goals – 30 to 120 days

7. Industry Focus Groups - Establish focus groups, made up by both PRO & BFA Board members plus any others that are willing to assist. These focus groups will begin to identify those persons that could benefit the most in their areas and to encourage them to participate both in the BFA and if qualified, in the PRO division through membership and adoption of PRO Best Practices.
8. FAA Involvement – The BFA will ask the FAA to provide a point of contact in the agency at the Flight Standards level. This person will be a point of contact through which board level discussions regarding continued efforts of the action committee are communicated. It would also serve for the BFA to identify those operators that are resistant to compliance or are blatantly non-compliant. This would

serve the same as the FAA Hotline, but would assure immediate recognition of any serious problem that may be found. This follows the FAA's compliance based philosophy program by finding those persons that may damage the safety culture and potentially removing them from the NAS.

9. The BFA and PRO division will begin to work toward the establishment of a "Medallion" style safety program with PRO. The program would be directed toward balloon ride operators regardless of their size, and would be based on the completion of graduated levels within the program. For example, an "A rating", "AA rating" "AAA rating" and finally "AAAA rating" or something similar.

To achieve specific ratings requirements, participating organizations would need to meet levels of participation in the compliance program. Items such as attendance at BFA Safety Seminars, teaching at BFA Safety Seminars, 2nd class medicals, number of passengers flown, random drug screening, verifiable, recorded flight reviews, FAASTeam member participation, Commercial Auto insurance ratings, pilot background checks, graduated hour requirements for various larger size balloons, proof of insurance, and the like would all be considered as components of the rating.

A graduated scale of ratings would be developed to accommodate aspiring small operators that will work at achieving the same compliance levels as the large operators.

10. Public Perception – A campaign will be developed through contact with:

a. All balloon clubs and related organization to discuss safety through both their safety seminars and newsletters and encouraging them to adopt the safety culture and compliance philosophy.

b. All balloonists through direct contact from the BFA to promote the alliance with FAA in establishing new goals for safety in the ballooning industry.

c. Local news media when possible to provide positive stories about ballooning and about the combined efforts of both industry and the FAA to provide an assurance of the safety of ballooning

11. Website Database – The BFA and PRO division will begin to establish a public database of balloon ride operators. This database would include operators' compliance commitment and participation ratings. This information will be publicized in any way possible to give the consumer a place through which to choose a ride operator that has adopted the safety guidelines, and to provide a list of questions that they may ask of balloon ride operators prior to making the decision to participate.

#### Long Range Goals – 120 days and continuing

12. Meetings with FAA – Establish regular meetings with FAA (six month intervals or sooner upon FAA request) to update and review goals. This also provides the FAA with confidence that the BFA and PRO division are continuing to work toward an increase in compliant balloon ride operators, both large and small, and to allow FAA to update interested parties from the public, media or Congress.

13. FSDO Involvement - Appoint regional ambassadors to work with their Flight Standards Offices and to educate them on the industry's Compliance Philosophy involvement. This will also provide an

industry point of contact for question posed to local FAA offices concerning ballooning activities. These ambassadors could also become FAASTeam members that represent the ballooning segment of the aviation industry.

14. BFA Database - The BFA will work with industry and the insurance companies to gather information on pilot activity, passengers flown, and unrecorded incidents to establish possible risk areas and to work in those areas to assist the balloonist in compliance and safety.

15. PRO Division Promotion - PRO Board members will focus on collecting names and contacts for commercial pilots in their region that are not part of BFA & PRO. A concerted effort will begin to bring those persons or companies to BFA and PRO memberships. The long range goal should be to sign up everyone who answered the PRO survey and was not a PRO member and to identify and encourage membership and participation by all commercially rated balloonists.

16. The BFA and PRO divisions in unison with the FAA will continue to monitor ballooning activities and to identify areas of possible risk. These areas will become the focus of promoting a continued safety and compliance attitude. BFA and PRO division members will continue to meet to evaluate and develop new strategies to encourage compliance with PRO Best Practices and to continue to provide the public with a means to evaluate and decide on their balloon ride operator.