

heating or when the balloon is descending rapidly. The mouth crew should then stabilize the basket and help load passengers.

Many pilots prefer to attach the scoop to the basket cables before inflation begins. This requires slightly more care during the inflation to avoid damaging the scoop, but eliminates the step of attaching the scoop after the balloon is upright and makes the scoop fully functional throughout all stages of the inflation.

#### 4.2.10 PASSENGER BRIEFING AND EQUIPMENT

Passengers should be informed well before meeting for the flight that they should wear sturdy shoes (such as climbing boots or strong walking shoes), long pants, long-sleeved shirts or jackets, and, if anticipating flying at high altitudes, warm clothes, even if ground temperatures are warm.

Passengers should be issued protective headgear and leather gloves. Pilots are strongly encouraged to require all occupants to wear protective headgear and gloves during flight, and most especially during landing and takeoff, if there is much wind or if the landing field is small for the speed of the wind.

Passengers should be briefed on what to expect during the takeoff, landing, and in flight, and what their responsibilities include. Point out the safe places in the basket to hold on during landings. Instruct the passengers not to touch the deflation or vent line during any phase of the flight, or to operate or interfere with any of the controls.

### **WARNING! DANGER!**

**It is dangerous to rely on a passenger to assist with the deflation line, fuel system, or as navigator or obstacle spotter during the flight or during the landing! These are pilot responsibilities which should not be delegated to persons without balloon piloting experience and without authority to act on their own judgement.**

A passenger may decide to operate a control instead of holding on properly during a high-speed landing. A passenger may pull the deflation line against its attachment at the burner instead of its attachment to the parachute. Passengers are not trained and experienced at shutting off the fuel system, and may as likely turn something on as turn it off. Passengers are normally not familiar with visual perceptions of powerlines or power poles. **You cannot rely on a passenger for landing clearances**, but it may be helpful to ask your passengers to act as additional "spotters" of powerlines for you, with you as pilot personally confirming the information passengers report.

Passengers should be briefed to hold on with both hands, knees slightly bent to absorb shock on impact, and to stay down in the basket to prevent being thrown out during the landing. If a stand-up landing is anticipated, the passengers need not brace their bodies against the wall of the basket or against each other. If it will be a high wind landing or a landing during a rapid vertical descent and it is expected that the basket may rebound or tip over or drag on a corner, the passengers should be briefed to face **away** from the direction of flight, hold on to an interior basket handle or tank collar in front of them, and crouch slightly. This position is most likely to prevent them from being thrown from the basket on impact or while dragging.

The pilot, of course, should assume a position which allows him to reach the controls, especially the deflation line, but should also be low in the basket and well-braced. In a high-wind landing, the pilot should pull out the deflation panel or parachute rapidly and completely a few feet (1-2 meters) before touchdown, and should hold the deflation line securely in a hand which is also tightly grasping an interior basket handle or tank collar. **It is most critical that the pilot remain in the basket during the landing process.** If the deflation line gets away from the pilot during a drag landing, there is normally enough slack in the line so that the pilot will not have to return to a full standing position to grab it but should be able to reach the line while still crouching in the basket.

Ideally, in a high-wind landing the pilot should close all tank liquid and vapor shutoff valves just before touchdown. While this is ideal, it is not always possible, as quite often heating is necessary right up until the time the deflation line is pulled. If possible, after the deflation line is pulled and the pilot is braced for landing, turn off the pilot light at the burner or pop the quick releases on the pilot hoses to eliminate the pilot lights as sources of ignition, should the blast valve get knocked open accidentally on the landing, or should there be any other source of propane.

**Passengers should be briefed that, during all landings, it is imperative that the pilot concentrate on checking for obstacles, checking for powerlines, and checking on fuel reserves, and that during the approach and landing the passengers should not talk or otherwise distract the pilot.**

The pilot should realize that any time he is flying within 50-100 feet (15-30 meters) of the highest obstacles around, he is essentially in an approach-to-land situation, and all the pilot's attention should be on possible landing, even if the pilot does not intend to make a touch and go or landing. This includes silence of the passengers, preparation of the pilot and passengers for landing, and holding the deflation line in hand. Should landing suddenly become necessary for any reason, the pilot has protected himself and his passengers from lack of preparation.