

Operator/Owner Safety Recommendations

The pilot's passenger briefing for each and every flight must emphasize all of the possible landing scenarios regardless of the forecast weather conditions for the flight period. That includes high wing landings when the basket tips over. The passengers must hold on to the rope handles with both hands on all landings until instructed by the pilot in command to let go and disembark. This command must be repeated at least three times and get acknowledgement from each individual passenger that they understand and will comply with these landing instructions. There must be a sense of urgency in the pilot's voice commands if the pilot anticipates a hard or fast landing. It is far better to overstate the landing scenario than understate it.

In addition to the previously stated intensified passenger briefing, repeating the commands at least three times and getting a verbal yes from each individual passenger that they understand and will comply with these landing instructions I would recommend the following:

All balloon manufacturers selling hot air balloons in the US should be required to install an individual restraint system for all occupants similar to the pilot restraint system found in Kubicek balloon baskets. This should be required as standard equipment on all newly manufactured baskets. This simple belt restraint system is easy to operate and would provide an added layer of safety protection for both the passengers and pilot. If this basket had been equipped with this type of restraint system for each individual occupant this tragic accident would have been prevented.