

Albuquerque Air Traffic Control Tower, Top Gun Hot Air Balloon Competition Club

LETTER OF AGREEMENT

SUBJECT: Balloon Flight Operations/Procedures in Albuquerque, NM Class C Airspace

1. **PURPOSE AND SCOPE:** To establish notification procedures between representatives of balloon festivals and balloon operators and the Albuquerque (ABQ) Airport Traffic Control Tower (ATCT) and to authorize deviations, subject to certain conditions, from 14 CFR §§ 91.130, 91.215, and 91.225, for balloon operators seeking to operate in ABQ Class C airspace.
2. **EFFECTIVE DATE:** May 16th, 2025
3. **PARTIES TO THIS AGREEMENT:** The FAA will require each balloon operator seeking to operate under the procedures and conditions herein to sign this Agreement unless the signatory is a balloon festival or association/society representative. A balloon festival or association/society representative may sign this Agreement on behalf of those operators participating in the festival or behalf of its members if:
 - a. The balloon festival representative submits to the ABQ ATCT the names of those participating operators prior to the festival.
 - b. The balloon association/society submits to the ABQ ATCT the names of its members who have requested in writing to operate under this Letter of Agreement (LOA or Agreement) along with their written attestation that they are knowledgeable and will adhere to the notification procedures and deviation conditions herein.
4. **RESPONSIBILITIES:** Any person who is party to this Agreement is responsible for ensuring that they or, in the case of a balloon festival or association/society representative, their participants or members as identified pursuant to Section 3. are knowledgeable and adhere to the notification procedures and deviation conditions contained herein.

Note: Regardless of the deviations authorized by this LOA, a balloon festival representative is still responsible for contacting Flight Standards to obtain any necessary waivers of the sections listed in § 91.905 prior to the event.

5. **TERM:** This LOA will expire on March 31st, 2027.
6. **RENEWAL:** The FAA may renew the LOA prior to its termination.
7. **PROCEDURES & CONDITIONS:**
 - a. Notification Procedures:
 - (1) If ten (10) or more balloon operators intend to operate as a group at any one time, a representative of the balloon festival or balloon operator(s) that is a party to this Agreement must contact ABQ ATCT via phone at (505) 856-4948 no

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later than one hour prior to commencement of operation for coordination purposes and provide ABQ ATCT with the following information:

- i. A list of all participating aircraft and operators;
- ii. Each balloons registration (N) number; and,
- iii. Each operator's:
 - A. Name and
 - B. Airman's Certificate Number.
- iv. Expected launch time and location
- v. Designated "flight lead balloon" whose operator must establish two-way radio communications with ABQ ATCT, and ensure that participating balloons comply with this Agreement. The flight lead balloon will notify ATCT immediately of any distress, emergency, or LOA non-compliance issues.
- vi. Expected duration of operations
- vii. Expected altitudes of operations
- viii. Expected drift or float directions

(2) The representative must keep the information required under 7.(a)(1)(i)-(iii) current and must email any updates to 9-AJO-AJT-ABQ-Balloon@faa.gov.

- b. 14 CFR § 91.130: Pursuant to its authority to authorize deviations under 14 CFR § 91.130(a) and (e), ABQ ATCT authorizes balloon operators that are party to this Agreement as well as operators identified in Section 3. by a balloon festival or association/society representative that is party to this Agreement to operate in ABQ Class C airspace without:

(1) Establishing communication prior to entering the airspace as required by § 91.130(c) unless any part of the flight occurs south and east of the intersection of Interstate Highway 25 and Interstate Highway 40 in which case the balloon operator must monitor the ABQ ATCT on 120.3 MHz and be prepared to respond to communication (See Attachment 2 for a graphical depiction).

(2) Establishing two-way radio communication when operating in the interior of Class C airspace, a 5 nautical mile radius from the Albuquerque Sunport outbound (See Attachment 3 and Attachment 4 for a graphical depiction) in the following locations, except as required by 7(a)(1)(v) of this Agreement:

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- i. North of Interstate 40 (I-40) and west of Interstate 25 (I-25) – no deviation restrictions to Class C operations.

Note: No deviation is authorized South of Central Ave. and north of the Tijeras Arroyo (overhead the Albuquerque International Sunport).

- ii. South of the Tijeras Arroyo, at an altitude at-or-below 8500 MSL.
- iii. South of I-40 and west of I-25 – at an altitude at-or-below 8500 MSL with the exception of an area bounded by Bridge Boulevard SW/Avenida Dolores Huerta to the north, Coors Boulevard SW to the west and Rio Bravo Boulevard SE to the south. In this area, balloons not properly equipped are exempted at-or-below 6000 MSL provided they are over or west of the Rio Grande River. Balloon operators must communicate with ATC in this area.

Note: No deviation is authorized east of Rio Grande River, between Bridge Boulevard SW/Avenida Dolores Huerta and Rio Bravo Boulevard SE

(3) Establishing two-way radio communication in the exterior of Class C airspace, a 5 to 10 nautical mile radius from the Albuquerque Sunport(See Attachment 3 for a graphical depiction) in the following areas except as required by 7(a)(1)(v) of this Agreement:

- i. North of I-40 and west of I-25 – no deviation restrictions to Class C operation.
 - ii. North of I-40 and east of I-25 – at an altitude at-or-below 8500 MSL within an area bounded by I-25 to the west, Paseo del Norte Boulevard NE to the north and Tramway Boulevard NE to the east.
 - iii. South of I-40 and east of I-25 – at an altitude at-or-below 8500 MSL within an area bounded by Central Avenue SE/I-40 to the north and overhead the neighborhood of the Four Hills Village.
 - iv. South of I-40 and west of I-25 – at an altitude at or below 8500 MSL within an area bounded by I-40 to the north, Coors Boulevard SW to the west and Pajarito Road SW/Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge to the south.
- c. 14 CFR § 91.225: Pursuant to its authority to authorize deviations under 14 CFR § 91.225(b) and (g)(2), ABQ ATCT authorizes balloon operators that are party to this Agreement as well as operators identified in Section 3. by a balloon festival or association/society representative that is party to this Agreement to operate in ABQ Class C airspace without ADS-B Out equipment in those areas depicted in Attachment 4.

Note: Any operator who is not party to this Agreement or not identified in Section 3. by a balloon festival or association/society representative who is party to this

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Agreement must comply with § 91.225. An operator may seek a deviation under § 91.225(g)(2) by contacting ATCT via phone at: (505) 856-4948 at least one hour prior to the start of the operation.

- d. 14 CFR § 91.215: Pursuant to its authority to authorize deviations under 14 CFR § 91.215(b) and (d)(3), ATCT authorizes balloon operators that are party to this Agreement as well as operators identified in Section 3. by a balloon festival or association/society representative that is party to this Agreement to operate in ABQ Class C airspace without ATC Transponder and Altitude Reporting equipment in those areas depicted in Attachment 4.

Note: Any operator who is not party to this Agreement or not identified in Section 3. by a balloon festival or association/society representative who is party to this Agreement must comply with § 91.215. An operator may seek a deviation under § 91.215(d)(3) by contacting ATCT via phone at: (505) 856-4948 at least one hour prior to the start of the operation.

- e. Kirtland AFB/Albuquerque International Sunport/Airport Contingency

(1) If unavoidable circumstances require balloonists to fly over Albuquerque International Sunport, balloons shall climb to 8000 MSL and cross over the airport area. Descent below 8000 MSL may begin when balloon crosses the Tijeras Arroyo south of the airfield.

(2) If balloonists must land on the Albuquerque International Sunport complex, do so expeditiously and, if possible, you should not move the balloon equipment until airport security or military police arrive.

(3) Avoid landing on KAFB property except in emergency situations or for safety of flight reasons. If landing at KAFB is the only alternative, land as soon as it is safe. Remain with the balloon until base officials arrive with the chase crew, and remain with official KAFB escorts until departure from the base. For further information please contact Kirtland AFB.

ATTACHMENT:

Attachment 1: Albuquerque Class C Airspace

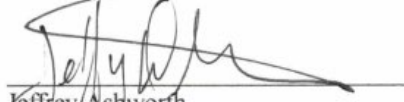
Attachment 2: Radio Monitoring Requirements

Attachment 3: Radio Contact Requirements

Attachment 4: Albuquerque Class C Airspace Authorized Deviation Map

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Jeremy Brumley
Air Traffic Manager
Albuquerque ATCT

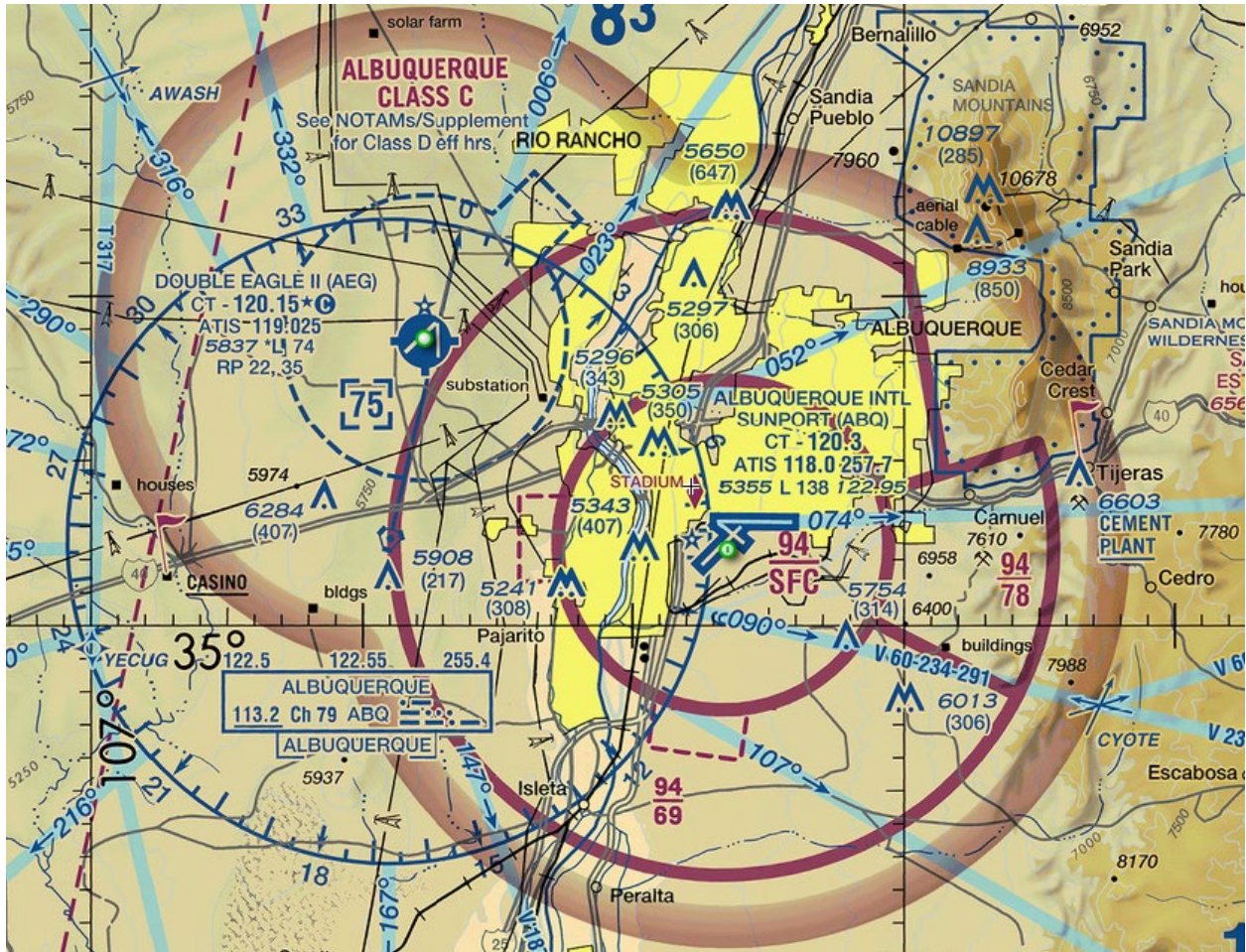


Jeffrey Ashworth
Vice President
Top Gun Hot Air Balloon Competition Club

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ATTACHMENT 1

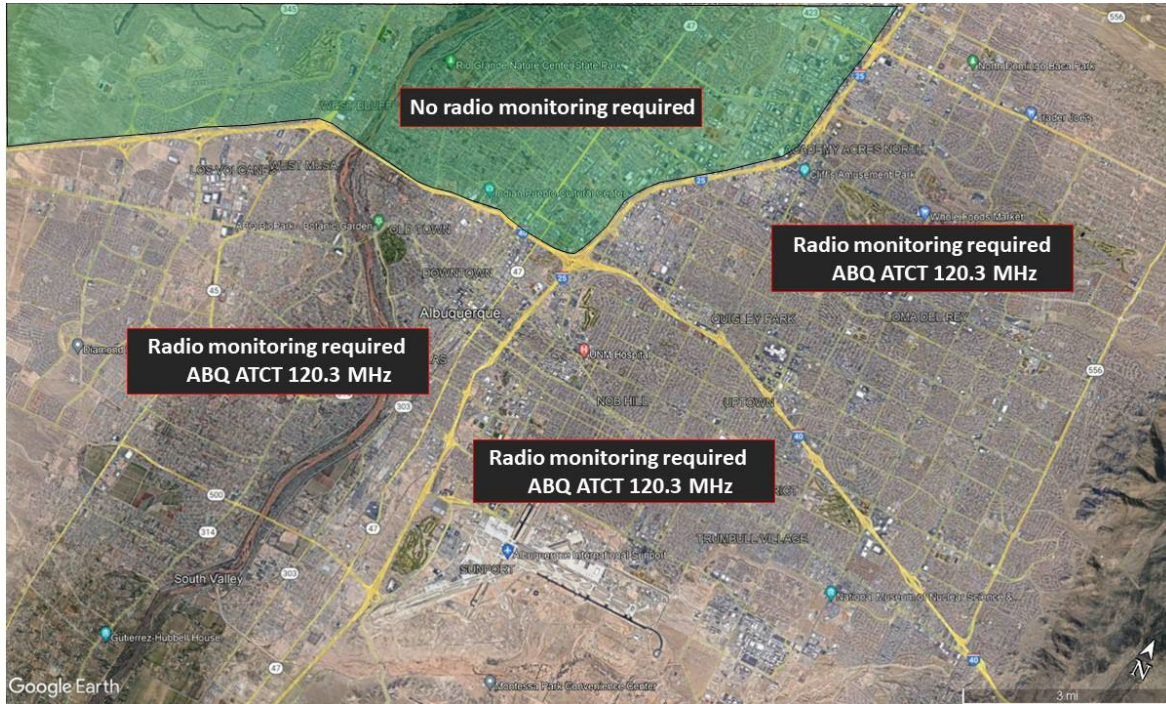
Albuquerque Class C Airspace Depiction



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ATTACHMENT 2

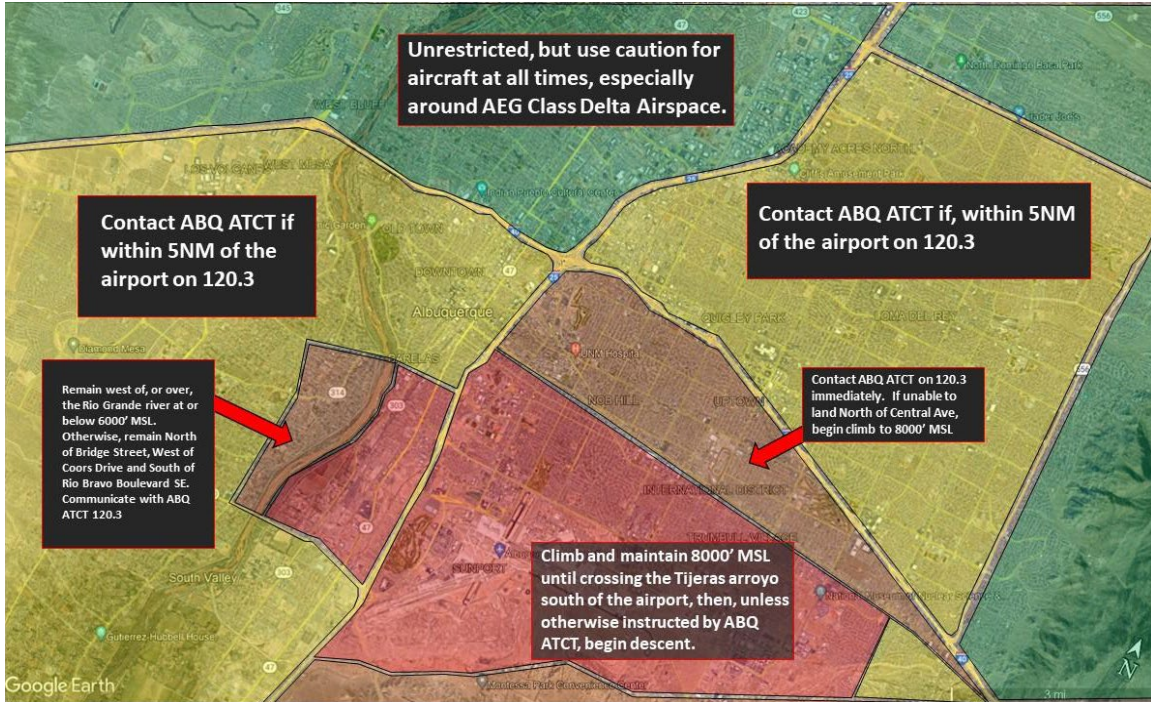
Radio Monitoring Requirements



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ATTACHMENT 3

Radio Contact Requirements



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ATTACHMENT 4

Albuquerque Class C Airspace Authorized Deviation Map

