

COMPETITION OPERATIONS HANDBOOK

(FOR HOT AIR BALLOON EVENTS)

Effective date April 1 2015

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10.1 MIDAIR COLLISION AND RECKLESS FLYING

GPS loggers provide a means to objectively determine what happened when climbing too fast or in case of a balloon collision. The tracks should be examined in case of observed and/or reported collisions. As a reaction to multiple serious collisions during the 2006 WHABC, the RSC at their meeting in 2007 decided to provide strong guidance on how to treat collisions. Any collision other than trivial envelope 'touches' (under AXMER R10.1.4) should be considered dangerous and penalized. Generally the idea is the more forceful the collision, the higher the penalty. Also, the principle should be that the one that could have avoided the problem best should be more severely penalised, which usually is the higher balloon. However this does not relieve the lower or climbing competitor from responsibility. In general, one can presuppose that a competitor climbing fast in competition acknowledges responsibility for collisions. For example, if a competitor climbing at 10 metres / second hits a balloon flying level then we would suggest 75% of responsibility was with the climbing competitor and 25% was with the level flying one. If however, a fast descending competitor hits a balloon flying level, the descending competitor should be assessed 100% responsibility and likewise, 100% of the penalty given.

Although rather difficult and subjective, when possible the aspects of recklessness and irresponsibility should be addressed. If a competitor is a repeat offender, he should be strongly penalised up to disqualification.

New competitors not used to flying in large events tend to not pay enough attention. This may be addressed at the general briefing and should not be a reason to reduce a penalty. The guidance mentioned above also applies to collisions during take-off and landings.

Taking all of the above into account, the SWG suggests the following penalties:

Lower Balloon		Higher Balloon	
VS m/s	Penalty	VS m/s	Penalty
1	Warning	-1	200
2	100	-2	400
3	300	-3	600
4	500	-4	800
5	700	-5	1,000
6	1,000	-6	1,000

The following AXMER rule was approved at the 2012 CIA Annual General Meeting:

"10.1.5 In case the competitor suffering the collision is not able to fly further tasks after the collision, the director may award him points for the lost tasks in that flight. (COH)"