

Global Ballooning Australia Safety Seminar

Winter Procedures

Saturday 13th July 2019

1. Winter Driving
2. 4wd Use in Winter + Practical Demonstration/Training
3. What to do once bogged - tips
4. Flying Balloons – winter procedures
5. Introduction of Driver Training Documents

Winter Ballooning

Winter ballooning in Victoria is our hardest time of year. Ground gets soft, vehicles get bogged, every day the weather is a challenge and the passenger numbers drop off. What all of this means to us as a company is we need to adjust our way of thinking and the way we approach each day. Winter ballooning is a constant challenge. The following document should help you to minimise some of the daily issues that you will face.

Winter Driving

As we know the most dangerous part of our morning's activity is whilst using the road. As an employee of GBA you are considered a professional driver and must act appropriately whilst using the road. You must consider the following points as a minimum:

- Plan your destination and communicate this to all drivers (drivers must ask where we are going also and understand the plan)
- Choose an appropriate place to pull over
- Leave the passengers in the vehicle until the launch site is confirmed
- Use hazard lights, indicating early
- Drive at safe and considerate speed
- Send vehicles ahead to open gates
- Constantly communicate on road conditions and hazards

Good safe drivers should pride themselves on their ability to consider the conditions they are faced with each day. Winter driving conditions are especially dangerous with fog, rain, slippery roads, dark conditions, soft ground and more traffic due to later starts. Some general considerations/ advice for winter are as follows:

- Minimum of 2 x Troopies out – leave buses behind on small number days
- City needs to carefully consider each launch site due to often having only one vehicle. (2 x bottles of Hydrogen)
- Ensure main troopies only are used – 2 x V8s, Balloon Sunrise, and Adelaide for the City.
 - o These vehicles are equipped with retrieve kits (Blue Bags), high lift jacks and long tow ropes
 - o Are considered the best vehicles for winter conditions
- BS also has diff lock giving it a better ability to get out of a bog
- Using competent drivers – only experienced 4wd drivers to drive on tricky ground

- Slow down your driving in fog, wet and slippery roads and rain. Extra stoppage distances and lights on always
- Limit driving on frosty grass – can kill grass
- Extra traffic around on dark roads, take extra care of other vehicles
- Fogged up/ frosted windows – less vision at the time of year you need it

Four Wheel Drive use in Winter

GBA will be introducing practical driving training at the Safety seminar this year.
It will cover many of the below points.

Some points of difference with driving of 4wd;

- High centre of gravity, large wheels and rugged suspension for ground clearance makes them prone to roll over.
- A loaded Troopy and trailer weighs about five tonnes. Trailers are fitted with electric brakes however you cannot assume they are working or adjusted correctly. Therefore, stopping distances are long. Triple this on a wet road.
- Troopies are not fitted with ABS, Traction control, Air bags or any of the fancy collision avoidance devices fitted in many modern vehicles.
- Not great mirrors, dirty windows, inadequate demisters, fogged up windows etc make for poor vision out of troopies

Four Wheel Drive use tips

- Before entering a paddock ensure both hubs are locked. Engage 4WD (use low gear if necessary – good for reversing trailers) and select the appropriate gear.
- Do not drive off the road / track blindly. Get out of the vehicle and walk the route and proceed with caution. Ensure window is wound down so you can hear and see if the ground is getting too soft. (It's easier to prevent yourself from getting bogged than it is to get the vehicle out once it is stuck).
- Momentum is the name of the game in wet conditions, however sliding out of control through a farmer's gate is undesirable.
- Any movement forward is still progress, do not stop until you have ceased to move forward. Moving the steering wheel left and right quickly can help to maintain traction and movement.
- If towing, be very aware of where the passengers are and keep them away. Ropes under tension are dangerous, may break and strike someone.
- Having loaded the balloon onto the trailer, consider how many passengers you put into the Troopy and whether you should ask the passengers to walk out rather than loading up the vehicle and trailer.

Balloon retrieve during the wet season tips

Getting the retrieve vehicle bogged on a landowner's property is a major issue to be avoided. Before entering a property where you consider you may get bogged or carve up the farmer's paddock, Pilot and Crew should first communicate and make a plan.

- Do not drive off until all vehicles are out of the paddock and on dry ground.
- Take your time to decide what to do

- Consider flying on to higher ground, walking the balloon over to you or an alternative access point.
- Speak to the landowner, they may suggest the best way into the balloon or even offer to tow the trailer in behind their tractor rather than have the paddock torn up by one of our 4 WD's.
- Carry the balloon out piece by piece

What to do once bogged - tips

Once you have become bogged the challenge is now getting out

- Check you have locked the hubs in 4WD and ensure you have chosen the correct gear
- If traction is lost and you are no longer moving forward stop the vehicle and endeavor to reverse out. Don't dig yourself in.
- If stuck, consider unhooking the trailer, moving the 4WD onto firmer ground and pull the trailer out with a rope. You will be amazed how much extra drag the trailer causes. The same technique can apply if you have another vehicle available.
- Do not allow pax to help. Get advice if someone has a greater knowledge than you however do not allow them to help.

Use below tools with caution. Experienced operators only

Snapstrap

- Use another Troopy with a snap strap, this is a strong strap with a some flex that is used to pull out a vehicle from being bogged
- Decide early if its best to go out backwards or forwards
 - Ensure you use D-Shackles and correct attachment points (under the vehicle on the cassis)
 - Ensure no pax or extra crew are in the way
 - Ensure you establish communication with tow vehicle via handheld
 - Ensure tow vehicle has hubs locked and correct gear chosen
- Use strength and momentum for this method, the Snapstrap is designed to flex and spring the vehicle out of the bog.
- The recovery kits have pulley's and extra lengths if you require an angle or more length on the tow
- Keep up the communication

Long tow rope

- As above except for the following point
 - Ensure that the rope is pulled tight before engaging in full momentum – the long tow rope has no flex and may break under sudden force

High lift Jack

- Used to get the trailer out of a bog – Not to be used for a vehicle
- Must be used by somebody with experience – can be a dangerous piece of equipment
- Designed to raise trailer and
- Put something solid under trailer wheel to help out of bog
- Dig out a ramp to allow easy escape
- Drive off with jack up and escape hole wheels are in

Orange traction mats

- Required especially for City buses – help to get traction on slippery grass
- Should be one in a YV vehicle also

Trailer Winch

- Can be used to pull a vehicle backwards out of a bog
- Use with caution as not set in perfect location to do so, keep up communication and go slow

Other considerations

Landowners

- After getting the vehicle out, repair any damage caused. This may require all hands-on deck post breakfast. Ensure the landowner knows you are coming back to make good any damage. If you are lucky, they may say not to worry about it. Honesty is the best policy and may save you and Global Ballooning from unnecessary worry and/or grief from local landowners.
- Ensure landowners are given Pilots numbers and assured communication on issue will be maintained

Launch site bogged vehicle

- If a vehicle has become stuck and the balloons are flying to the landing site consider the following
 - A vehicle must go ahead to give weather information
 - The buses must go ahead to allow the transport of passengers back to breakfast
 - Leave a minimum amount of crew (preferably the most competent in 4WD/ vehicle retrieve) behind to help get vehicle out
 - Communicate this to Pilot so he can plan for no crew at landing site

Passengers

- Consider how long you are going to take to unbog the vehicle and take back Pax if required
- Keep up communication with Pax in relation to what is happening. Promote the adventure side of ballooning and how lucky they are to experience getting bogged☺

Flying Balloon - Winter Procedures

Preflight planning

Pilots should be discussing all the scenarios for next day's flight and ensuring all wet weather considerations have been discussed and planned for.

Launch and Land - winter friendly properties

Certain properties are better in winter than others. This is due to the following:

- Higher/ sloped ground – water drains away
- Some river flats – sandy soils allowing water to drain away
- Paddocks without stock – not getting churned up or having manure covering it

The main properties to target in winter are:

- Adam's Farms
- Yering
- Scanlon's
- Eyton
- Sawyers
- McIntyres
- Rough Paddocks
- Front Paddocks of Herman's
- Rochford concert car park

We are asked to not land on certain Properties, these include;

- Two tone, Adams' properties, Voights'

Launch Sites – common sense needs to be used with all launch sites in winter.

Other considerations

- Vary your landing sites
- Communicate with other companies to minimize the use of launch sites
- Consider breakfast first on a light fog day

Pilot compartment covers

With more rain and drizzle around use must start using the pilot compartment covers. Wet tanks and heater pads causes damage to tanks and the heater pads and we must avoid this. The covers also protect the electronics such as transponders and VHF radios.

Wet Balloons

Ensure all wet balloons are marked with a blue flag after pack up and it is communicated on WeChat and to Belinda that a balloon is wet and in the bag

Ways to avoid wet balloons are:

- Don't fly, keep the balloon standing after landing and use the plastic, manage where you pack up, wait for showers to pass and then pack up
- Choose Balloons that can afford to be wet for a few days

Pax management

Managing passengers in the winter can be hard work, cold conditions and wet, muddy ground makes for some challenging conditions. Some considerations are as follows:

- Communicating weather conditions expected to pax preflight. Ensure pax know if it will be cold, wet, frosty etc. Do this on the App and Voice message
- Keeping pax feet dry and clean for breakfast at Balgownie/ Pullman should be a high consideration
 - Communicate the importance of bringing spare shoes/ socks for post flight. This can be done on the App, in the transfer messages and on the voice message
 - Transfer pax out of paddocks in vehicle or on trailer, look at where you park when you ask pax to get off trailer
 - Use the fire extinguisher to clean excess mud off shoes
 - Ensure pax are using mats before entering breakfast venues
- Keep alert to slippery conditions on entering and exiting the vehicle
- Be prepared for Pax not having enough clothing, we have many jackets etc for use in winter
- Be aware that breakfast finishes at 10.30am and passengers need to be back by 10am if possible to allow them to enjoy a relaxed breakfast, communicate with Balgownie if you will arrive late (after 10am)

Crew/ Pilot roster – pax numbers

Winter brings bad weather and low passenger numbers to the City and YV. Pilots and crew go on leave and we have less and less days of big numbers. Many companies close down in winter or reduce their days of flying to just the weekends. What this means to crew especially is a lot less work and rostered days where you will not work due to weather. It is a tricky scenario to manage this as in the summer and busier months we need as many crew on board as possible so we need to maintain a number of crew throughout the year.

We will try and give everyone crewing work at some stage however it is a time of year when you will not get the same amount of days as you do in the busy period. Please understand and appreciate that this is just the nature of the business we are in.

Driver Training Documents

GBA is aiming to introduce a Driver Procedures Manual – which will outline the daily duties, responsibilities and helpful information for all drivers in the company. This will also include company driving training and evaluation for all employees. All drivers will be required to sign off on these documents once they are issued. If you have anything further to add to them, please email through to operations@globalballooning.com.au.

The following documents will outline the training involved:

- GBA Driver Evaluation Form
- GBA Driver Training Record
- GBA Driver Procedures Manual

Global Ballooning Safety Seminar – Signature Sheet – July 2019

By signing below you acknowledge that you have read and understood the above Winter Safety Seminar Document – published by GBA July 2019

| Name | Signature | Name | Signature |
|-------------------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|
| Brian Garth | | Davin Richardson | |
| Edward Saunders | | Georgia Croft | |
| Harry Fraser | | Graeme Drummond | |
| Kiff Saunders | | Holger McMaster | |
| Ronald Kent | | John Stone | |
| Steve Buckley | | Katrina Brzozowska | |
| Tim Steiner | | Mark Gardner | |
| Antonio Greco | | Mia Fraser | |
| Bambi Dyson | | Nick Hambly | |
| Barry Ward | | Paterson Saunders | |
| Belinda Vella | | Chris Peak | |
| Brennan Corrigan | | Tash Buckley | |
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