



**Australian Government**  
**Civil Aviation Safety Authority**

**DRAFT**

**ADVISORY CIRCULAR**

**AC 131-01**  
**Manned free balloon - airworthiness and operations**

Advisory Circulars are intended to provide advice and guidance to illustrate a means, but not necessarily the only means, of complying with the Regulations, or to explain certain regulatory requirements by providing informative, interpretative and explanatory material.

**Advisory Circulars should always be read in conjunction with the relevant regulations.**

## Audience

This Advisory Circular (AC) applies to operators of commercial and private manned free hot air balloons and hot air airships.

**Note:** This AC does **not** apply to gas filled balloons or airships.

## Purpose

The proposed Part 131 will contain the regulations that apply to all manned free balloons. It will cover airworthiness, maintenance and operations matters including:

- licensing
- operational procedures
- flight training
- air operator certification.

In anticipation of the making of Part 131, and in the interests of clarity, the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) has developed this AC to cover some matters in relation to manned free balloons.

The purpose of this AC is to provide advice to operators about:

- airworthiness of manned free balloons and hot-air airships
- safety precautions to be taken during the operation of inflation fans.

## For further information

For further information on this AC, contact the Civil Aviation Safety Authority's Standards Division (telephone 131 757).

Unless specified otherwise, all regulations, subregulations, and divisions, referenced in this AC are references to the *Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998 (CASR)*.

# Status

This version of the AC is approved by the Executive Manager, Standards Division.

Version	Date	Details
v1.0		Initial issue of this AC. This AC replaces CAAP 41-1(1). In addition to the information detailed in CAAP 41-1(1) this AC provides additional guidance on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Part 31</li><li>• mixing of balloon components</li><li>• alignment of the time-in-service definition with standard industry practice</li><li>• precautions to be taken when using inflation fans.</li></ul>

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# 1 Reference material

## 1.1 Acronyms

The acronyms and abbreviations used in this AC are listed in the table below.

Acronym	Description
AC	Advisory Circular
AD	Airworthiness Directive
AOC	Air Operator Certificate
ARC	Authorised Release Certificate
ATSB	Australian Transport Safety Bureau
CAO	Civil Aviation Order
CAR	<i>Civil Aviation Regulations 1988</i>
CASA	Civil Aviation Safety Authority
CASR	<i>Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998</i>
COA	Certificate of Approval
EASA	European Aviation Safety Agency
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration (of the United States of America)
FAR	Federal Aviation Regulations
MA	Maintenance Authority
PIC	Pilot-in-Command

## 1.2 Definitions

Terms that have specific meaning within this AC are defined in the table below.

Term	Definition
Approved maintenance data	Regulation 2A of <i>the Civil Aviation Regulations 1988 (CAR)</i> specifies the constituent requirements, specifications and instructions that are contained in the maintenance data applicable to the maintenance of an aircraft and its aeronautical products. Balloons and airships are aircraft comprised of aeronautical products.
Hot air balloon	Lighter-than-air aircraft, which is not engine-driven and sustains flight through the use of an airborne heater.
Balloon component	The basket or gondola, burner, and any other associated aeronautical components of the aircraft (including fuel tanks).
Class B aircraft	A balloon is designated to be a class B aircraft in accordance with subregulation 2 (1) of CAR.

Term	Definition
Hot air airship	A power driven lighter-than-air aircraft where buoyancy is provided by hot air. A hot air airship is treated as if it were a balloon within this AC.
Major repair	The repair of damage that involves the replacement of any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• one or more panels in the upper half of the envelope</li> <li>• four or more panels in the lower half of the envelope</li> <li>• load tape repairs or replacement</li> <li>• any metal repairs requiring welding (including basket frames, load frames, burners and fuel tanks)</li> <li>• the making of any repair to the envelope suspension system or basket cables</li> <li>• any repair to the burner system other than replacement of seals or the cleaning of jets</li> <li>• any other repairs identified in the manufacturer's manual or approved maintenance data as major repairs.</li> </ul>
Manned balloon	A non-power-driven lighter-than-air aircraft capable of carrying one or more persons and equipped with controls to permit the pilot to control the altitude of the aircraft.
Time-in-service	The time from first lift off to final landing, prior to deflation, at the completion of the flight.

## 1.3 References

### Regulations

Regulations are available on the ComLaw website <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Home>

Document	Title
Part 31	Airworthiness standards for manned free balloons
Part 39	Airworthiness Directives
Regulation 2A of the Civil Aviation Regulation 1988 (CAR)	Approved Maintenance Data
Regulation 30 of CAR	Certificates of Approval
Regulation 33B of CAR	Airworthiness Authorities
Regulation 41 of CAR	Class B aircraft maintenance schedule and instructions
Regulation 42A of CAR	Maintenance schedule: manufacturer's maintenance schedule
Regulation 42C of CAR	Maintenance schedule: approved system of maintenance
Regulation 42E of CAR	Elections
Regulation 42M of CAR	System of maintenance: approval
Regulation 42W of CAR	Installation and use of aircraft components
Regulation 42WA of CAR	Requirements for authorised release certificate
Regulation 42ZC of CAR	Maintenance on Australian aircraft in Australian territory

Document	Title
Regulation 42ZE of CAR	Certification of completion of maintenance on aircraft in Australian territory
Regulation 50A of CAR	Aircraft log book
Regulation 50B of CAR	Alternative to aircraft log book
Regulation 51 of CAR	Reporting of defects in Australian aircraft
Schedule 6 of CAR	CASA system of certification of completion of maintenance
Part 5 of Schedule 7 of CAR	Specific maintenance on manned balloons and hot air airships
Part 2 of Schedule 8 of CAR	Maintenance on balloons
Civil Aviation Order (CAO) 95.53	Exemption from provisions of the Civil Aviation Regulations 1988 - Manned balloons and hot air airships - Aerial work & charter operations
CAO 95.54	Manned balloons and hot air airships - private operations
CAO 100.5	General requirements in respect of maintenance of Australian aircraft
CAO 101.54	Airworthiness certification requirements – manned free balloons
CAO 100.96	Administration and procedure - weight control of balloons
CASA Instrument EX115/15	Exemption – to allow supervision of maintenance on manned free balloons
FAR Part 31	Airworthiness standards - Manned free balloons
EASA CS-31HB	Certification Specifications for Hot Air Balloons

## 1.4 Forms

CASA's forms are available at <http://www.casa.gov.au/forms>

Form number	Title
Form 627	Recurring Airworthiness Directive Control
Form 902	Non-recurring AD, Special Inspection and Modification and Certification Log
Form 924	Aircraft maintenance certification log
Form 925	Log book statement Part 1
Form 928	Recurring maintenance control
Form 933	Lifed aircraft equipment record
Form 936	Weight and balance record
Form 946	Component history card

## 2 Airworthiness standards for manned free balloons

### 2.1 General

- 2.1.1 Part 31 details the airworthiness standards applicable to manned free balloons.
- 2.1.2 Part 31 provides for automatic recognition of the United States of America (USA) Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) and European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) airworthiness standards for manned free balloons and changes to those standards:
  - FAR Part 31
  - EASA CS-31HB
- 2.1.3 Given that automatic recognition, the approvals given under those regulatory systems may be taken to be an approval granted by CASA. CASA may also give, suspend or cancel such approvals.



## 3 Maintenance requirements

### 3.1 Maintenance schedule

- 3.1.1 Balloons are classified as class B aircraft, which are required under regulation 41 of the *Civil Aviation Regulations 1988 (CAR)* to have a maintenance schedule.
- 3.1.2 A balloon certificate of registration holder may maintain a balloon according to the manufacturer's maintenance schedule (regulation 42A of CAR) or an approved system of maintenance (regulations 42C and 42M of CAR).
- 3.1.3 Regulation 42E of CAR requires the selected schedule to be entered on the balloon's log book statement (Form 925), a copy of which is required to be forwarded to the CASA office that has administrative control over that balloon's records.
- 3.1.4 Regulation 42ZC of CAR specifies that all maintenance that is performed on balloons must be performed by appropriate persons. Major repairs, as per Part 5 Schedule 7 of CAR, may only be performed under the control of an appropriate certificate of approval (COA) holder, issued under regulation 30 of CAR.
- 3.1.5 Certain repairs where the manufacturer has not been consulted may be prohibited. Examples include the following:
- replacement of original fabric panels exceeding 50% of the total panel count
  - welding repairs
  - swaging
  - repair of flying wires or basket wire assemblies.
- 3.1.6 The appropriate persons to perform and certify for maintenance are listed below:
- the pilot-in-command (other than a student pilot) limited to:
    - o post assembly daily or pre take-off inspections
    - o maintenance specified in Part 2 of Schedule 8 of CAR, in accordance with paragraph 42ZC (4) (db) of CAR.
  - A person mentioned in section 3.2.

### 3.2 Repairs and maintenance

- 3.2.1 The only persons permitted to conduct maintenance (other than pilots mentioned in 3.1.6) are:
- the holder of a maintenance authority (MA) under regulation 33B of CAR
  - the holder of an authorisation issued under subregulation 42ZC (6) of CAR to the extent indicated on the authority
  - a supervised employee of a COA holder in accordance with CASA Instrument EX115/15
  - a person under the supervision of a person permitted by paragraph 42ZC (4) (e) of CAR in accordance with EX115/15.
- 3.2.2 Periodic inspections required by the maintenance schedule should be complied with at the following periods:

- for all balloons every 100 hours time-in-service or 12 months (whichever is the earlier)
  - where mixing of the balloon’s components approved for interchanging with those of another balloon has occurred, i.e. when a component is added to an airworthy envelope or a basket or gondola associated with that envelope, then an operator should have a system to ensure that all components:
    - o are approved for compatibility and
    - o are within the required inspection period and
    - o the inspection period will not expire during the planned flight.
- 3.2.3 An operator should have a system to ensure that, for a planned flight with a combination of components attached to an envelope, a weight and balance Form 936 has been completed and a loading system specified. An acceptable means of compliance is for an envelope log book or technical record to contain multiple weight total records for various combinations of components. The complete weight records may be produced from component weight records rather than actual weighing of each component combination
- 3.2.4 As an Airworthiness Directive (AD) is a direction under Part 39, any additional special inspection, test, check or modification requirements that are contained in an AD must be observed.
- 3.2.5 As the log book, or technical log if used (see section 5), also performs the function of the maintenance release, any maintenance that will be required to be performed on the balloon between each periodic inspection is required to be entered in the log book or technical log and certified by a person who is authorised to make the certification.

### **3.3 Maintenance certification requirements**

- 3.3.1 Regulation 42ZE of CAR directs that all maintenance is to be certified. When maintenance has been completed an entry and certification is required in the balloon’s log book to record maintenance and should include:
- periodic inspections as per section 3.2.2
  - hard landing inspection whenever a landing has been made while the balloon was experiencing a high rate of descent if damage is suspected
  - defect rectifications
  - repairs
  - modifications
  - component replacements
  - post power line or lightning electricity strike
  - an envelope inspection post overheating as indicated by an envelope temperature monitoring device
  - special inspections, tests, checks or modifications specified as a requirement of an airworthiness directive.
- 3.3.2 The entries and certifications need to include a complete and detailed description of:
- the maintenance that has been performed
  - the data referenced

- the form tracking number from the Authorised Release Certificate , or equivalent, of any material or parts used
- the authority and signature of the certifier
- the date the maintenance was completed
- any applicable requirements of Schedule 6 of CAR.

## 4 Maintenance records

### 4.1 Requirements

- 4.1.1 A balloon, for the purpose of record keeping, means the envelope and suspension system. The basket and burner are major components of a balloon and may have separate log books (Form 924). Where regular interchange of components occurs as in section 3.2.2 it is recommended that the operator maintains separate log books for the major components.
- 4.1.2 The balloon requires a log book to record its airworthiness and maintenance history, and maintenance certifications. An approved log book is the CASA Aircraft Maintenance Certification Log (Form 924) and other associated CASA record keeping documents (see section 5).
- 4.1.3 A log book needs to be retained by the certificate of registration holder, as specified in CAO 100.5, for at least 12 months after the balloon has been withdrawn from service. Alternative compliant log books may be used as specified in subsection 4 of CAO 100.5.

## 5 Log book or technical log

### 5.1 Technical log use

- 5.1.1 An operator may use a CASA-approved log book alternative (generally described as a technical log) for recording time in service and maintenance. An entry in the log book or technical log constitutes the maintenance release.

### 5.2 Log entries

- 5.2.1 The log book(s) and/or the technical log is to be made available to the pilot-in-command prior to and at the completion of each flight. The pilot-in-command should make an entry to record the flight time, both daily and cumulative, in the log book(s) or technical log, as soon as practicable after each flight.
- 5.2.2 An entry needs to be made in the appropriate log book, and technical log if used, to identify and highlight damage or defects that, if not corrected, could compromise the safe operation of the balloon. This entry will need to be signed and dated by the person making the entry.
- 5.2.3 Provided the damage or defect mentioned in the entry does not render the balloon or component unairworthy, that entry may be endorsed to indicate assessment has been made in accordance with the maintenance manual, noting that the balloon is serviceable and airworthy. This further entry may only be made by the following personnel:
- the holder of a valid appropriate MA under regulation 33B or subregulation 42ZC (6) of CAR
    - o the pilot-in-command (being other than a student pilot) for the maintenance that is detailed in Part 2 of Schedule 8 of CAR, in accordance with paragraph 42ZC (4) (db) of CAR
    - o the pilot must be the holder of a commercial pilot(balloon) licence or a private pilot certificate (balloons) that is valid for the balloon as per paragraph 42ZC (4) (db) of CAR.
  - An AOC holder may require a pilot to be approved by the AOC holder to make log book entries.
- 5.2.4 Where a balloon or component has become unairworthy, the defect needs to be entered in the log book, and technical log if used. The balloon should not be flown until there is an entry in the log book, and technical log if used, certifying that the maintenance necessary to rectify the defect has been completed by either:
- the holder of a valid appropriate MA
  - or
  - a person authorised to do so on behalf of a COA holder.
- 5.2.5 It is an offence under the CARs for a person to cancel an entry if the defect has not been rectified.

## 6 Inflation fan

### 6.1 Australian Transport Safety Bureau advice

6.1.1 In July 2013 the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) issued the following safety advisory notice (SAN) AO-2013-116-SAN-003:

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau advises balloon operators to review their risk controls in relation to the safety of cold-air inflation fans, especially in relation to passenger proximity to operating fans, and the security of loose items, such as passenger clothing.

6.1.2 The ATSB advise that suitable procedures should be in place when using portable powered fans:

Portable powered fans are regularly used to cold inflate hot air balloons. These inflation fans with rapidly spinning propellers are potentially dangerous and all balloon operators should have procedures for ensuring their safe use.

### 6.2 Operating procedures

6.2.1 The CASA recommended safe operating procedures when using inflation fans include:

- fan blades or propellers should be protected by a protective guard, grill or cage constructed so that clothing, loose hair or other items cannot be easily drawn in or become entangled with the moving parts.<sup>1</sup>
- fans should be clearly marked with signs or placards indicating danger and the need to keep clear
- all fans should be fitted with a kill switch facilitating an instant shut down
- any ground crew or other personnel working around the balloon should be briefed on the operation of the fan and know how to operate the kill switch
- the immediate area surrounding an operating fan should be marked with a safety cone or cones and/or barrier to define an exclusion zone for all but trained personnel
- during operation, the fan should be placed so that the Pilot-in-Command (PIC) or a trained person attending the fan can easily reach the kill switch
- fans should not be running when being moved over the ground
- operating the fan while pre-loading a balloon when the basket is on its side is not recommended. If at any time any passengers are pre-loaded into the balloon basket as above, then any running fan should be attended by a trained person.

**Note:** If more than one fan is used for one balloon each fan should be attended by a trained person

- during windy inflations, extra care should be taken to avoid a moving basket knocking over a running fan. Care should also be taken to avoid any part of the envelope or control lines coming into contact with the fan. The PIC or person delegated by the PIC should ensure the fan is switched off as soon as it is no longer required and moved away from the basket

<sup>1</sup> Refer to International Standard ISO 12499:1999.

- for AOC operators, passengers should be briefed verbally (or by card in their native language) to stay clear of the fan while it is running and not to approach the fan wearing loose items of clothing or scarves
- AOC holders should detail their fan operating procedures in their operations manual.