



EASA Safety Information Bulletin

SIB No.: 2012-14
Issued: 03 August 2012

- Subject:** Improving the safety of aiders on the ground when relocating an inflated hot air balloon
- Ref. Publication:** [1] Accident Report [3X155-09](#), 25 January 2011
German Federal Bureau of Aircraft Accident Investigation
German Federal Bureau of Aircraft Accident Investigation
- [2] "[Hände weg von Tragschlaufen!](#)",
Ballonsport Magazin, BSM 1-10, Ausgabe Januar 2010
"Hands off rope handles",
Balloon Sport Magazine, BSM 1-10, Issue January 2010
- Applicability:** All hot air balloons.

(Gas balloons are not directly affected as their lift can be weighed off very precisely and their inertia being approximately ten times lower.)
- Description:** The relocation of an inflated hot air balloon by aiders on the ground may develop into a dangerous situation if the balloon ascends again and aiders do not let go at the same time. The pilot might not be able to oversee how many aiders were actually carrying the basket as they might be outside of his viewing angle. An aider still clinging to the basket's carrying handles might be noticed by the pilot too late.
- Relocating an inflated balloon by carrying the basket is a common practice, usually after landing in calm conditions. However, the psychological situation after landing is that passengers often assume that the flight has ended. They are willing to help during relocation but are already relaxed and probably not fully attentive. This can happen also to helpful passers-by and inexperienced ground crews.
- Recommendation(s):** It is recommended to use a so-called "Spider" which could be connected to the load frame. The concept is similar to the "Spider" used for the ground handling of airships.

This is information only. Recommendations are not mandatory.



Airship Ground Crew handling a “Spider”¹

A “Spider” allows staying away from the basket while pilot can keep an eye on the complete ground crew. Unlike a single rope more force can be applied because the force is distributed and the ground crew does not hinder each other. No free end of a rope should have a loop for easier release of hands.

Balloon manufacturers should be contacted by pilots or owners whether they offer a ready-for-use “Spider”.

Contact:

For further information contact the Safety Information Section, Executive Directorate, EASA. E-mail: ADs@easa.europa.eu

¹ Source of picture unknown, owner is kindly asked to notify reference.

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