

BFCL.215 Commercial operation rating

Regulation (EU) 2020/357

1. A BPL holder shall exercise the privileges of his or her licence during commercial operations with balloons only if he or she holds a commercial operation rating in accordance with this point.
2. An applicant for a commercial operation rating shall:
 1. have attained the age of 18 years;
 2. have completed 50 hours of flight time and 50 take-offs and landings as PIC on balloons;
 3. have the privileges for the class of balloon in which the privileges of the commercial operation rating will be exercised; and
 4. have passed a skill test on the relevant class of balloon during which he or she shall demonstrate to an FE(B) the competence required for commercial balloon operations.
3. The privileges of the commercial operation rating shall be limited to the class of balloon in which the skill test in accordance with paragraph (b)(3) has been completed. The privileges shall be extended upon application to another class of balloon if, in that other class, the applicant complies with paragraph (b)(3) and (b)(4).
4. A pilot who holds a commercial operation rating shall exercise the privileges of that rating in commercial passenger ballooning only if he or she has completed:
 1. within the 180 days preceding the planned flight:
 1. at least three flights as PIC in balloons, of which at least one shall be in a balloon of the relevant class; **or**
 2. one flight as PIC in a balloon of the relevant class under the supervision of an FI(B) who is qualified in accordance with this point; and
 2. within the 24 months preceding the planned flight:
 1. a proficiency check, in a balloon of the relevant class, during which he or she shall demonstrate to an FE(B) the competence required for commercial passenger ballooning; **or**
 2. a refresher course at an ATO or a DTO, tailored to the competence required for commercial balloon operations, including at least six hours of theoretical knowledge instruction and one training flight in a balloon of the relevant class with an FI(B) who is qualified for commercial balloon operations in accordance with this point.
5. To maintain the privileges of the commercial operation rating for all balloon classes, a pilot who holds a commercial operation rating with privileges extended to more than one class of balloons shall comply with the requirements in paragraph (d)(2) in at least one class of balloons.

6. A pilot who complies with paragraph (d) and holds a commercial operation rating for the hot-air balloon class shall exercise the privileges of that rating in the hot-air balloon class only on balloons that represent:
 1. the same group of the hot-air balloon in which the proficiency check as specified in paragraph (d)(2)(i) **or** the training flight as specified in paragraph (d)(2)(ii), have been completed; **or**
 2. a hot-air balloon group with a smaller envelope size.
7. The completion of the flight under supervision as specified in paragraph (d)(1)(ii), the proficiency check as specified in paragraph (d)(2)(i) and the refresher training course as specified in paragraph (d)(2)(ii) shall be entered in the logbook of the pilot and shall be signed by the head of training of the ATO or the DTO, or the FI(B) or the FE(B) that is responsible for the training course, the supervision or the proficiency check, as applicable.
8. A pilot who has completed an operator proficiency check in accordance with point BOP.ADD.315 of Annex II (Part- BOP) to this Regulation shall be deemed to comply with paragraph (d)(2)(i).

AMC1 BFCL.215(b)(4) Commercial operation rating

ED Decision 2020/003/R

Skill test for the commercial operation rating

1. General
 1. The take-off site should be chosen by the applicant depending on the actual meteorological conditions, the area which has to be overflown, and the possible options for suitable landing sites. The applicant should be responsible for the flight planning and should ensure that all equipment and documentation for the execution of the flight are on board.
 2. The skill test may be conducted in two flights. The total duration of the flight(s) should be at least 45 minutes.
 3. An applicant should indicate to the FE(B) the checks and duties carried out. Checks should be completed in accordance with the flight manual or the authorised checklist for the balloon or hot-air airship on which the test is being taken. During pre-flight preparation for the test, the applicant should be required to perform crew and passenger briefings and demonstrate crowd control. The load calculation should be performed by the applicant in compliance with the operations manual or flight manual for the balloon used.
2. Flight test tolerance
 1. The applicant should demonstrate the ability to:
 1. operate the balloon or hot-air airship within its limitations;
 2. complete all manoeuvres with smoothness and accuracy;
 3. exercise good judgment and airmanship;
 4. apply aeronautical knowledge; and

5. maintain control of the balloon or the hot-air airship at all times in such a manner that the successful outcome of a procedure or manoeuvre is never seriously in doubt.
2. The following limits are for general guidance. The FE(B) should make allowance for turbulent conditions and the handling qualities and performance of the balloon or hot-air airship used:

Height

1. normal flight: ± 100 ft
2. with simulated emergency: ± 150 ft

CONTENT OF THE SKILL TEST

Hot-Air Balloon

1. Content of the skill test

1. The skill test contents and sections set out in this point should be used for the skill test for the issue of a commercial operation rating in the hot-air balloon class:

Note: Use of checklist(s), airmanship, control of balloon by external visual reference, look-out procedures, etc. apply in all sections.

Section 1: Pre-flight operations, inflation and take-off	
a	Pre-flight documentation (licence, medical certificate, permits to take off, insurance certificate, aeronautical charts, AFM, logbook, technical logbook, checklists, etc.), flight planning, NOTAM(s) and weather briefing, knowledge of Part-BOP
b	Balloon inspection and servicing, minimum equipment list (MEL)
c	Suitability of launch site
d	Load calculation
e	Crowd control, crew and passenger briefings
f	Assembly and layout
g	Inflation and pre-take-off procedures including passenger involvement and briefing
h	Take-off
i	ATC compliance (if applicable), operation of radio and/or transponder (including emergency procedures)
Section 2: General Airwork	
a	Climb to level flight
b	Level flight
c	Descent to level flight
d	Operating at low level
e	ATC compliance (if applicable)
Section 3: En-route procedures	
a	Dead reckoning and map reading
b	Marking positions and time
c	Orientation and airspace structure

Section 1: Pre-flight operations, inflation and take-off	
d	Maintenance of altitude
e	Fuel management
f	Communication with retrieve crew and passengers
g	ATC compliance (if applicable)
Section 4: Approach and landing procedures	
a	Approach from low level, missed approach and fly on: Passenger briefing and execution of exercise
b	Approach from high level, missed approach and fly on: Passenger briefing and execution of exercise
c	Pre-landing checks
d	Passenger pre-landing briefing
e	Selection of landing field
f	Final passenger briefing, landing, dragging and deflation
g	ATC compliance (if applicable)
h	Actions after flight (recording of the flight, closing flight plan (if applicable), briefing passengers for packing balloon, contact landowner)
Section 5: Abnormal and emergency procedures	
This section may be combined with Sections 1 through 4.	
a	Simulated fire on the ground and in the air
b	Simulated pilot light and burner failures
c	Simulated passenger health problems
d	Other abnormal and emergency procedures as outlined in the appropriate flight manual
e	Oral questions

Gas Balloon

(2) The skill test contents and sections set out in this point should be used for the skill test for the issue of a commercial operation rating in the gas balloon class:

Note: Use of checklist(s), airmanship, control of balloon by external visual reference, look-out procedures, etc. apply in all sections.

Section 1: Pre-flight operations, inflation and take-off	
a	Pre-flight documentation (licence, medical certificate, permits to take off, insurance certificate, aeronautical charts, AFM, logbook, technical logbook, checklists etc.), flight planning, NOTAM(s) and weather briefing, knowledge of Part-BOP
b	Balloon inspection and servicing, MEL
c	Suitability of launch site
d	Load calculation
e	Crowd control, crew and passenger briefings
f	Assembly and layout
g	Inflation and pre-take-off procedures including passenger involvement and briefing
h	Take-off
i	ATC compliance (if applicable), operation of radio and/or transponder (including emergency procedures)
Section 2: General Airwork	
a	Climb to level flight

Section 1: Pre-flight operations, inflation and take-off	
b	Level flight
c	Descent to level flight
d	Operating at low level
e	ATC compliance (if applicable)
Section 3: En-route procedures	
a	Dead reckoning and map reading
b	Marking positions and time
c	Orientation and airspace structure
d	Maintenance of altitude
e	Ballast management
f	Communication with retrieve crew and passengers
g	ATC compliance (if applicable)
Section 4: Approach and landing procedures	
a	Approach from low level, missed approach and fly on: Passenger briefing and execution of exercise
b	Approach from high level, missed approach and fly on: Passenger briefing and execution of exercise
c	Pre-landing checks
d	Passenger pre-landing briefing
e	Selection of landing field
f	Final passenger briefing, landing, dragging and deflation
g	ATC compliance (if applicable)
h	Actions after flight (recording of the flight, closing flight plan (if applicable), briefing passengers for packing balloon, contact landowner)
Section 5: Abnormal and emergency procedures	
This section may be combined with Sections 1 through 4.	
a	Simulated closed appendix during take-off and climb
b	Simulated parachute or valve failure
c	Simulated passenger health problems
d	Other abnormal and emergency procedures as outlined in the appropriate flight manual
e	Oral questions

Hot-Air Airship

(3) The skill test contents and sections set out in this point should be used for the skill test for the issue of a commercial operation rating in the hot-air airship class:

Note: Use of checklist(s), airmanship, control of hot air airship by external visual reference, look-out procedures, etc. apply in all sections.

Section 1: Pre-flight operations, inflation and take-off	
a	Pre-flight documentation (licence, medical certificate, permits to take off, insurance certificate, aeronautical charts, AFM, logbook, technical logbook, checklists etc.), flight planning, NOTAM(s) and weather briefing, knowledge of Part-BOP
b	Hot air airship inspection and servicing, MEL
c	Suitability of launch site
d	Load calculation

Section 1: Pre-flight operations, inflation and take-off	
e	Crowd control, crew and passenger briefings
f	Assembly and layout
g	Inflation and pre-take-off procedures including passenger involvement and briefing
h	Take-off
i	ATC compliance (if applicable), operation of radio and/or transponder (including emergency procedures)
Section 2: General Airwork	
a	Climb to level flight
b	Level flight
c	Turns
d	Stationary flight
e	Descent to level flight
f	Operating at low level
g	ATC compliance (if applicable)
Section 3: En-route procedures	
a	Dead reckoning and map reading
b	Marking positions and time
c	Orientation and airspace structure
d	Plotting and steering expected track
e	Maintenance of altitude
f	Fuel management
g	Pressure and engine parameter checks
h	Communication with ground crew
i	ATC compliance (if applicable)
Section 4: Approach and landing procedures	
a	Approach, missed approach and go-around
b	Pre-landing checks
c	Selection of landing field
d	Landing and deflation
e	ATC compliance (if applicable)
f	Actions after flight (recording of the flight, closing flight plan (if applicable), briefing passengers for packing balloon, contact landowner)
Section 5: Abnormal and emergency procedures	
This section may be combined with Sections 1 through 4.	
a	Simulated fire on the ground and in the air
b	Simulated pilot light, burner and engine failures
c	Approach with simulated engine failure, missed approach and go-around
d	Simulated passenger health problems
e	Other abnormal and emergency procedures as outlined in the appropriate flight manual
f	Oral questions

AMC1 BFCL.215(d)(1)(i) Commercial operation rating

ED Decision 2020/003/R

Criteria for recency flights as PIC

1. In order to count as a flight in terms of point BFCL.215(d)(1)(i), the flight should:
 1. have a duration of at least 10 minutes;
 2. reach the minimum standard flight altitude as per point (f) of point SERA.5005 of the Annex to Regulation (EU) No [923/2012](#); **and**
 3. be completed by a full stop of the basket on the ground.
2. Every flight phase that complies with points (1) to (3) of point (a) during a single balloon operation should be deemed as a separate flight.

AMC1 BFCL.215(d)(2)(i) Commercial operation rating

ED Decision 2020/003/R

Proficiency check

1. For the proficiency check as per point BFCL.215(d)(2)(i), the content of the skill test for initial issue of the commercial operation rating as set out in AMC1 BFCL.215(b)(4) should be used. Additionally, the examiner should assess the candidate's knowledge of recent aeronautical information circulars (AICs) and NOTAMs.
2. The proficiency check may be conducted during a commercial passenger ballooning (CPB) operation, provided that abnormal and emergency procedures are simulated before or after the flight on the ground without passengers on board.

AMC1 BFCL.215(d)(2)(i); BFCL.215(h) Commercial operation rating

ED Decision 2020/003/R

Credits for a proficiency check in accordance with Part-BOP

The holder of a commercial operation rating should be deemed to comply with point BFCL.215(d)(2)(i) as long as the latest operator proficiency check completed in accordance with point [BOP.ADD.315](#) of Annex II (Part-BOP) is still valid, provided that this operator proficiency check included procedures for commercial passenger ballooning.

AMC1 BFCL.215(d)(2)(ii) Commercial operation rating

ED Decision 2020/003/R

Refresher course

1. Theoretical knowledge instruction

The 6 hours of theoretical knowledge instruction should include at least all of the following:

1. Evaluation of passengers:
 1. assessment of fitness of passengers;
 2. criteria to decline to carry a passenger; and
 3. special factors for disabled or limited mobility passengers;
2. Passenger briefings:
 1. use of briefing cards;
 2. pre-inflation briefing;
 3. pre-launch briefing; and
 4. pre-landing briefing;
3. Passenger embarkation:
 1. procedures for safe embarkation;
 2. use of ground crew to assist with embarkation;
 3. positioning of passengers in the basket for weight, balance and management; and
 4. factors concerning passengers' personal property;
4. Passenger care for landing:
 1. use of seats where fitted;
 2. stowage of passengers' personal equipment; and
 3. special factors in case of more than 19 passengers on board, in which case an additional crew member is required in accordance with point BOP.ADD.410 of Annex II (Part-BOP);
5. Emergency procedures:
 1. fire in the air;
 2. fire on the ground;
 3. fuel system failures;
 4. deflation system failures;
 5. fast landing;
 6. hard landing; and
 7. passenger incapacitation in flight; and
6. Documentation:
 1. loading calculation;
 2. fuel calculation;
 3. completion of passenger manifest; and
 4. dealing with last-minute changes.

2. Training flight

1. A training flight as stipulated in point BFCL.215(d)(2)(ii) should be a flight that:

1. follows the content of the skill test for initial issue of the commercial operation rating as set out in AMC1 BFCL.215(b)(4); and

2. is conducted on a one-to-one basis between one pilot and one instructor only, with no other pilot on board who is taking credit for that flight.
2. Each training flight should be preceded with a briefing and closed with a debriefing between the instructor and the candidate. In order to add value to the training flight, any element of flying a balloon where candidates feel they would benefit from instruction should be discussed. The flight should then be focused on those specific elements with an instructor demonstration prior to candidate practice being performed.
3. The training flight may be conducted during CPB operation, provided that:
 1. abnormal and emergency procedures are simulated before or after the flight on the ground without passengers on board; and
 2. passengers are made aware that the intended flight will be a training flight.

→ [BFCL.300](#)

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