



Balloon Fiesta pilot radios

ATTENTION: The weather forecast transmitted by Balloon Fiesta will be heard on 119.475 MHz on your aircraft radio

Welcome to the 2023 Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta. In a continued effort to improve communications with pilots during all flights and glows, The Balloon Fiesta is providing this information on Pilot radio usage. Please note to be in compliance with FCC rules, Radios used on Fiesta licensed frequencies must be certified for FCC part 90 rules.

YOUR RADIO: The Baofeng UV-82C is a Dual band handheld commercial radio that is FCC Part 90 approved. These radios will be pre-programmed to the frequencies authorized by the FCC for use by AIBF pilots during Balloon Fiesta. The purpose for these radios is to ensure that pilots can get timely information and instructions from the Balloon Meister, the radio includes the local NOAA weather radio station, but the Balloon Fiesta weather frequency (119.475 MHz) still requires an aircraft radio to access. The radios have a feature called Dual Watch, which means you can monitor 2 frequencies simultaneously. One of which is the receive-only Balloon Meister channel that you will be able to monitor during flight operations and balloon glows.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE: When you turn the radio on, a “welcome” screen will briefly appear. The top line will display FIESTA and the second line 2022. The radio will then display the 2 channels that are being monitored. The top channel will be labeled FIESTA and cannot be changed. This channel is “receive only” and will be used by the Balloon Meister to communicate information to the pilots and crews monitoring the radio. The second channel may be set to one of 9 channels for use by the Pilot and Crew to communicate during flight operations, if necessary. As there are over 500 balloons registered this year, crews should observe courtesy and good communication practices.

Keep your transmissions short and to the point. This is not CB, so unnecessary chatter is discouraged. Individual crews may change the lower frequency to one of the 9 available channels. When the radio is turned on it will display the channel you have previously selected and will be locked on that channel. This will help you to stay on the same channel as your crew. You may change your channel selection by depressing the # key on the keyboard until the lock symbol on the upper right of the LCD display next to battery capacity symbol disappears, then you can step up or down to select your preferred channel by using the up down arrows on the keyboard.

Selectable Channels are labeled AIBF 1 thru AIBF 9. We recommend that you work with your team of pilots and crews in selecting channels so as not to interfere with each other. Coordinate with others communicating on the same channel and make sure you are accurate in who you are calling. A good practice is to use “Tactical Call Signs”, such as “windy pilot this is windy chase” are customary to identify who you are calling followed by who you are. Please note that the channels that are approved for Balloon Fiesta use are in the business radio bands and are used by other businesses in the area. We have selected “digital squelch codes” for both transmit and receive on these radios to minimize interference with others in the area. What this means is you should not hear others in the area that may be on the same channel. Balloon Fiesta-issued radios should be the only ones that will be able to “talk” to one another. You are authorized to use these radio frequencies during Balloon Fiesta. Balloon Federation of America (BFA) members in good standing with BFA are authorized to use certain frequencies outside of Balloon Fiesta. If you would like to join the BFA and continue using those frequencies nationwide please visit www.bfa.net.

CHARGING AND OPERATION OF YOUR RADIOS: Please take time to read the instruction manual that is packed with each radio and is also on the Balloon Fiesta web site Baofeng Radio Manual (<https://balloonfiesta.com/Radios>) it is informative and will provide information on the features of your radios. Be sure to charge your radio before using it and charge it as part of your flight planning and preparation each day. In order to receive instruction from the Balloon Meister during Balloon Fiesta flight operations and glows, the radio must be turned on and the volume set at a level that can be heard. Included with each radio are accessories including an ear piece/microphone that will allow hands free operation and help in a noisy environment.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT: The Balloon Fiesta pilot radios will be inspected, programmed and tested prior to on site registration to insure that they operate correctly. AIBF will provide additional technical support for only the Baofeng UV-82C during on-site registration. If you have any issues with your radios you may send an E-mail request to, pilotradios@balloonfiesta.com. Please include accurate contact information, (i.e. cell number, e-mail address and launch site number) so we may respond to you in a timely manner.

CONCLUSION: We hope you have a very safe and enjoyable 51st Balloon Fiesta and good communications with your new radios.

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