

Columbia Department of Parks and Recreation Hot Air Balloon Policy

Purpose: To provide for and regulate hot air balloon activities in Columbia City Parks.

Policy : It is the policy of the City of Columbia's Department of Parks and Recreation to accommodate hot air balloon activities in the city parks and outdoor open space areas where such activities are safe and not in conflict with other park activities or facilities. To facilitate such use, the following regulations are established:

1. The use of Columbia's City Parks for the landing or take-off of hot air balloons shall require a park special use permit. The Park and Recreation Department shall issue such a permit following the submission of a park special use permit application and all required documentation. The permit shall be valid from the date of the approval of the permit to the expiration date of the applicant's liability insurance policy (see item # 6 below). Following the expiration of the applicant's liability insurance policy, an application for a new park special use permit with proof of insurance must be submitted and approved.
2. Hot air balloons shall not be allowed to take-off or land from the following areas: golf courses, aquatic facilities, lighted and fenced athletic fields, all other athletic fields when such fields are in active use, formal landscape beds/plantings, playgrounds, congested areas, close proximity to buildings/structures, or any other area that could potentially cause harm to park visitors, amenities, or structures. All other appropriate open space within the park system may be used for take-offs and landings.
3. All balloon chase and other support vehicles are restricted to paved surfaces (existing roads and parking lots). Such vehicles are not allowed to drive onto grassy areas to unload or retrieve balloons.
4. Balloon pilots are urged to use discretion when choosing a landing spot so as to not interfere with any ongoing organized events or practices.
5. Ballooning may be restricted or prohibited if there is a conflict or potential conflict with other park activities.
6. Individual hot air balloons using city parks land for take-offs or landings shall be required to have in force a one million dollar liability insurance policy which names the City as an additional insured for the period of operation.

7. Organized balloon events of six (6) balloons or more are required to have in force a two million dollar liability policy for the event with the City of Columbia named as an additional insured for the duration of the event.
8. Hot air balloon tethered rides are expressly prohibited in the City Parks.
9. A special use permit documenting the specific date and approximate time shall be required for four or more balloons taking off in a park area at the same time. This does not apply to individual balloons landing in the same park.
10. Hot air balloon pilots and crews are required to follow all park rules and regulations and are subject to disqualification from using the parks for ballooning if a violation occurs. Citations may be issued if violations occur.
11. Pilots that wish to take off or land in the city parks are required to submit as part of the park special use permit application, an identification letter for each balloon for which a permit is applied. The identification letter shall contain a photo of the balloon, owner's name, pilot's name, address, phone contact, and balloon registration number. Failure to submit an identification letter for any balloon using the city parks would be in violation of park rules.

Approved By: Michael J. Hood 
(Director of Parks and Recreation)

Date: April 6, 2009