



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Aviation  
Administration**

# Memorandum

SEP 17 2001

Subject: INFORMATION: Unmanned Weather Research  
Balloon

Date: September 6, 2001

From: Acting Manager, Airspace Branch

Reply to P. Graham  
Attn. of: (404) 305-5594  
FAX: (404) 305-5099

To: Air Traffic Managers at RDU AFSS, AND  
AFSS, GNV AFSS, PIE AFSS, MIA AIFSS,  
ZJX, ZTL, ZMA, ILM, CRE, MYR, CHS, SAV,  
JAX, DAB, MLB, VRB, FPR, PBI, FXE, FLL,  
MIA, EYW FCT, PMP FCT, BCT NFCT, SUA  
NFCT

The U. S. Department of Commerce/NOAA has requested to launch unmanned weather research balloons during the 2001 and 2002 hurricane season.

The balloons are approximately 10 feet in diameter and are not equipped with a transponder or radar reflecting devices. The balloons will be launched from the beaches along the Eastern seaboard from North Carolina to Florida. The balloon launch site will be in areas where hurricanes have been projected to hit landfall within 36 hours. Accordingly, within 12-24 hours prior to projected landfall, NOAA will release the weather balloon. The balloon trajectory will be into the hurricane over the Atlantic Ocean. As the balloon approaches land, NOAA will actuate a cut-down/deflation device. The projected maximum altitude of the balloon is 3500 feet. The balloon operators are required to contact the nearest Flight Service Station not less than 24 hours or more than 48 hours prior to operation for the purpose of issuing a Notice to Airmen. Additionally, 24 hours prior to operation, the balloon operators are also required to notify the nearest FAA ATC Facility and advise them of the impending flight.

If you have any questions regarding this waiver, contact Patricia Graham at (404) 305-5594.

Wade T. Carpenter

Attachments