

12/5/2025

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

2025-307/9-12

2298753

To: FAA (AFS-200, AFS-260)

Info: FAA (AVP-1, AVP-200, AFS-900, Director of Air Traffic Operations - WSA, CSA, ESA (North and South)), A4A, ATSG, ALPA, IFALPA, APA, ASAP, ATSAP, IATA, CAPA, ICASS, IPA, NATCA, NBAA, NTSB, RAA, SWAPA, TWU

From: Becky L. Hooey, Director
NASA Aviation Safety Reporting System

Re: Weather Balloon Hazards

We recently received ASRS reports describing a safety concern that may involve your area of operational responsibility. We do not have sufficient details to assess either the factual accuracy or possible gravity of the report. It is our policy to relay the reported information to the appropriate authority for evaluation and any necessary follow-up. We feel you should be aware of the enclosed deidentified report.

To properly assess the usefulness of our alert message service, we would appreciate it if you would take the time to give us your feedback on the value of the information that we have provided. Please contact Dr. Becky Hooey at (408) 541-2854 or email at becky.l.hooey@nasa.gov.



Aviation Safety Reporting System
P.O. Box 189 | Moffett Field, CA | 94035-0189



ACN 2298753

DATE / TIME

Date of Occurrence 202510
Local Time Of Day 1201 to 1800

PLACE

Locale ZDV.ARTCC
State CO
Altitude - MSL 34000

AIRCRAFT / EQUIPMENT X

ATC / Advisory - Center ZDV
Make Model Name Large Transport, Low Wing, 2 Turbojet Eng
Operating Under FAR Part 121

PERSON 1

Function - Flight Crew Pilot Flying
ASRS Report Number 2298753

EVENTS

Anomaly Conflict - Airborne Conflict
Anomaly Inflight Event / Encounter - Other / Unknown
Detector - Person Air Traffic Control
Result - Air Traffic Control Issued Advisory / Alert

NARRATIVE 1

While in cruise flight at FL340 in the vicinity of Denver heading southwest approaching the front range, DEN Center started issuing alerts to aircraft on the frequency of weather balloons in the area. They reported weather balloons were at altitudes around FL240 and also at FL420 and said if aircraft needed deviations to please advise. They also reported the balloon or perhaps their equipment were 28 inches wide. ATC also mentioned that the balloons were equipped with transponders but that many of the transponders had frozen and failed. I'm not sure how any aircraft flying at Mach .78 would be able to see and avoid balloon or its equipment that was 28 inches wide even it was in clear VMC conditions making these balloons a threat to safety.

Obviously an aircraft has already collided with one of these balloons resulting in a shattered windscreen, flight deck damage and crew injury at altitude; a situation that ended safely for passengers, but that could have ended with far worse consequences. How much longer are these balloons going to be launched into crowded airspace saturated with passenger jet aircraft? This is a safety hazard that needs to be addressed. An obvious recommendation would be to halt the launch of these weather/research balloons into crowded airspace.

SYNOPSIS

Air carrier pilot reported that although ATC issued alerts for weather balloons in the area at cruise altitudes, the presence of the balloons in the vicinity of fast-moving aircraft is hazardous and should be addressed.