

# GPSL Hosting Guide

Assembled by Zack Clobes, W0ZC  
Last Updated 13 January, 2021

Start a manila folder from day one to collect contracts, receipts, notes, etc.

It is recommended that the GPSL host not plan on flying his own balloon unless the rest of the team can take over ALL of the preflight preparations. Simply put, you won't have time in the weeks prior to GPSL to mess with a balloon payload.

It is also recommended against trying to do a presentation at GPSL unless you are very comfortable with the material and the presentation is already written. Again, this type of stuff tends to be put off to the last moment.

If possible, have a second person assist in updating the website with GPSL information. Many of the items on this checklist can be overlooked by excessive delegation, however having a dedicated webmaster makes for a clean break in duties.

## 9-12 Months Prior

### Setting Dates

Determine dates for the event:

Thursday's Date \_\_\_\_\_

Friday's Date \_\_\_\_\_

Saturday's Date \_\_\_\_\_

Sunday's Date \_\_\_\_\_

Establish a site to host Friday's symposium, preferably at the official hotel. Depending on cost, it is nice to have the/a room available throughout the weekend for groups to gather in. Determine what A/V equipment is provided with the room such as projectors, computers, DVD/VCR's, microphones (wireless lapel is preferable). Internet access is all but required.

Site name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Site Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Event Price \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Request time off from your employer for Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

## 6-9 Months Prior

### Announcing the Event

Begin updating the website with local information, hotel information, travel directions, etc.

Decide on conference fees.           \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Press Release

Put together press release for the event with hotel information, times, etc. Post press release to website.

Send press release to QST, CQ VHF, ATV Quarterly.

## 3-6 Months Prior

### Invitation to Present

Post an invitation to the GPSL group for people to present at Friday's symposium. Use the following as a template for the email.

*I'm now taking volunteers and requests for sessions at the 200X GPSL in XXXXXXXXXXXX. If you are interested in presenting, please include the following in your response:*

- 1. Topic (5 words or less)*
- 2. Short description of your presentation (2 sentences or more)*
- 3. How much time do you expect the presentation and related questions to take?*
- 4. Do you have a preference of when you present?*
- 5. What resources will you need for your program (projector, computer, DVD, tables, etc)?*
- 6. A cell phone number for the presenter for questions or coordination.*

*If you are not interested in presenting, but would like to see someone else speak on a specific topic, I'd be interested in hearing your suggestions.*

### Gas Supplier

Determine how to transport Helium/Hydrogen bottles to the launch site. A full sized pick-up can hold five bottles easily. There may be legal implications for hauling more than about seven tanks in a non-commercial vehicle. The gas supplier may have options for delivery.

Find a supplier of gas for the event. Establish a discounted price for volume purchases as we generally purchase between 7-12 bottles. Discuss delivery options – often they will deliver to the launch site, or at least your home to simplify things. Make sure they're aware that we will NOT need regulators.

Cost for K (244cuft) bottle      \$\_\_\_\_\_ + tax      \$\_\_\_\_\_

Cost for T (290cuft) bottle      \$\_\_\_\_\_ + tax      \$\_\_\_\_\_

Delivery Location      \_\_\_\_\_

Delivery Date      \_\_\_\_\_

Pickup Date      \_\_\_\_\_

Delivery Cost \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Restocking fees for unused tanks \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact name who gave quote \_\_\_\_\_

***Get the quote in writing.***

### Updates to Website

Update website with cost of helium bottles, including tax, delivery charge, restocking fee, etc. Post to the group that helium order forms are available online. If paying by PayPal, be sure to include a surcharge to cover PayPal fees. Set a deadline at least six weeks prior to launch to allow for flexibility in ordering.

Update the website with the session schedule.

Remind group to make hotel reservations. The hotel usually won't want to block out rooms if they're not filling up.

### Dinner Reservations

Make reservations for Thursday night's dinner. This is usually a come-and-go affair, as not everyone is in town yet. Plan on 50%-90% of the overall attendance. Keep in mind that often children and spouses attend this dinner. 7:00pm seems to work well.

Restaurant name \_\_\_\_\_  
Reservation Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Group Size \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone # \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Make reservations for Friday's lunch. This is tightly scheduled amongst the sessions. Having lunch at the same general location as the symposium works very well, but catering the dinner would be difficult without a pre-registration for the conference.

Restaurant name \_\_\_\_\_  
Reservation Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Group Size \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone # \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Make reservations for Friday's dinner. Almost everyone attends this dinner.

Restaurant name \_\_\_\_\_  
Reservation Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Group Size \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Saturday lunch plans are very difficult to make and depend highly on the launch location and trajectory.

Make tentative reservations for the Saturday evening dinner. Attendance will be approximately 60% of the overall group size as many head for home after the recovery. Also, be prepared for an exceptionally long chase that may put the group out of the area for dinner.

Restaurant name \_\_\_\_\_  
Reservation Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Group Size \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone # \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

### Launch Sites

Pick at least two potential launch sites. Keep in mind that GPSL usually launches just shy of 10 balloons, so the odds of hitting that “little” bit of water increase dramatically. The group as a whole will be very unwilling to fly into the following areas: Populated cities, large bodies of water, Interstate highways, Class B or Class C airspaces, Class D airports, and Military Operations Areas (MOA's). Keeping this in mind, find two or three potential launch sites with will avoid most of these obstacles regardless of flight projections.

Consider getting a sectional from the local airport. These go out of date about twice a year, so often pilots will have old maps available for free.

Launch Site 1 \_\_\_\_\_  
Site 1 Lat/Lon/Alt \_\_\_\_\_N \_\_\_\_\_W \_\_\_\_\_ ft MSL  
Site 1 Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Site 1 Contact Phone # \_\_\_\_\_  
  
Launch Site 2 \_\_\_\_\_  
Site 2 Lat/Lon/Alt \_\_\_\_\_N \_\_\_\_\_W \_\_\_\_\_ ft MSL  
Site 2 Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Site 2 Contact Phone # \_\_\_\_\_  
  
Launch Site 3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Site 3 Lat/Lon/Alt \_\_\_\_\_N \_\_\_\_\_W \_\_\_\_\_ ft MSL

Site 3 Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Site 3 Contact Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

## 2 Months Prior

### Gathering Flight Information

Request flight information. Use the following template for the email.

*It's time to start thinking about your flight train for GPSL this year. If you or your group intends to fly this year, please provide me with the following:*

*(Note: Even if you're not sure of all the parameters at this point but do intend to fly, please let me know so that I can assign time slots and anticipate the gas requirements.)*

- 1. Name of your group*
- 2. Website for your group*
- 3. Callsign(s) of your payload*
- 4. A cellphone number that will be carried on the chase (for post-recovery coordination)*
- 5. Number of transmitters and their band (specific frequencies only if you're rock-bound or don't wish to be time-slotted with others on the 144.34/39 freq).*
- 6. Size of balloon*
- 7. Approx number of helium tanks required (K or T)*
- 8. Total flight weight*
- 9. Expected ascent/descent rate*
- 10. Projected burst altitude*
- 11. Special requirements/requests for the GPSL coordinator*
- 12. Short description of your payload including cameras, transmission modes, experiments, etc.*

### Verify Hotels

Check availability of hotel rooms and post status to group/web.

### Reminders to Attendees

Remind people to get their Helium orders in. Recap your existing orders.

Verify reservations for the symposium room. Check into refreshments including water, tea, coffee, pop, as well as candy. Often time drinks and cups are available for free or a small fee. Candy can usually be brought in, but you'll need dishes, etc. Candy and pop machines in the vicinity are popular among the group.

## 1 Month Prior

### Press Release

Send press release to local newspaper, radio stations, TV stations.

### Order Gas

Order the gas from the established provider.

Total Number of K tanks ordered \_\_\_\_\_

Total Number of T tanks ordered \_\_\_\_\_

### Audio/Video Equipment

Arrange to pick up any necessary A/V equipment like projectors, computers, DVD/VCR's, speakers, etc.

### Filing a NOTAM

Establish who needs to be contacted to file a NOTice To Air Men (NOTAM). If you haven't filed in the past, you'll find that usually the people taking the NOTAMs won't have any better idea of what to ask for as you will have to tell them.

Local Flight Service Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Some tips for filing the NOTAM:

You're dealing with pilot-types when filing a NOTAM. Pilots think in terms of bearings, ranges, and Three Letter Acronyms (TLA's). When they ask for a launch site, they don't want to hear Sometown USA High School Parking lot, instead they will need 3 miles north of the HUT VOR on the 020 radial.

They will need (whether they know it or not) the following information:

- Launch Site
- Launch Time
- Minutes to crossing 60,000' (Flight Level 600)
- Maximum altitude
- Bearing to landing zone
- Distance to landing zone
- Total Flight Time

Sometimes they will also ask ascent rates, descriptions of the flight trajectory, etc.

Given that the flight path is based purely on forecast winds, be as vague as possible when giving them the information. For example, don't try to tell them that it goes 3 miles east, then turns southeast on heading 130. That'll only stir up trouble.

**Be prepared! Do not even try to file a NOTAM less than 24 hours prior to launch.** They can be very anal about the issue and despite the fact that we're technically exempt, they can try to prevent the launch altogether.

They usually require a follow-up call about 1 hour prior to launch.

### APRS iGates

Find multiple APRS iGates to gate 144.34 traffic onto the Internet. Ideally there should be one iGate within a few miles of the launch site(s), as well as one down range near the landing zone. It never hurts to have backups, even out-of-state, to help provide redundancy.

Igate #1 Name \_\_\_\_\_

Igate #1 Phone \_\_\_\_\_



Igate #2 Name \_\_\_\_\_

Igate #2 Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Igate #3 Name \_\_\_\_\_

Igate #3 Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Igate #4 Name \_\_\_\_\_

Igate #4 Phone \_\_\_\_\_

## 2 Weeks Prior

### Small Supplies

Gather refreshments and/or candy for the event. If providing candy dishes, plan on one well-stocked bowl for every 4 people. Don't forget the bowls themselves.

### Updating Website

Update website with flight configurations. Verify with group that all flights are accounted for, and that the helium for these launches has been ordered.

### Confirmations

Confirm availability of the launch sites.

### Flight Predictions

Begin running flight predictions and post them to the website. Often, Mark Conner will assist in providing weather forecasts to the group.

## 1 Week Prior

Confirm Helium transport methods. Borrow truck, etc...

Gather tracking equipment, HT's, chargers, laptops, maps, sectionals, etc. Keep everything handy so that they can all be charged up over the weekend.

Document the Common Traffic Advisory Frequency (CTAF) at or near the planned launch sites

CTAF for site #1 \_\_\_\_\_

CTAF for site #2 \_\_\_\_\_

CTAF for site #3 \_\_\_\_\_

Encourage presenters to send their presentations in ahead of time so that they can be loaded onto the laptop and tested.

Confirm your reservations at the various restaurants. By now you should have a reasonable number for head counts.

Gather A/V equipment if providing your own at the symposium.

Remind your I-gates to QSY to 144.34MHz (or whatever the official GPSL Freq is).

## Week of the Event

### Thursday

Paul Verhage usually tries to get to town early enough to help wrap up any last-minute details.

The rest of the group usually begins arriving in town by 5:00pm

Setup symposium room if possible.

File NOTAM on Thursday afternoon based on current flight projections. The NOTAM can be revised on Friday afternoon based on final launch location decision.

Charge HT's for coordination for Friday's events/travels

### Friday

Charge HT's for launch day.

Revise NOTAM once final launch location has been decided (as early as possible – remember they want 24 hours).

Take group photo at symposium.

Mark Helium tanks with group name to keep things organized. Any reserve tanks to be refunded should have their caps taped on with Duct Tape for tracking purposes.

Charge airband radio if launching from or close to an airport.

Clean up meeting room and return A/V equipment to owner.

### Saturday

Call Flight Service to confirm NOTAM and to let them know things are on schedule to launch. They usually want a 1 hour notification before launch.

Bring Helium to launch site.

Coordinate launch times between groups.

Announce balloon launch on airband radio if operating at or near an airport.

Gather Helium tanks up and return them to home/supplier.

## Post Event Clean Up

Return Helium to supplier.

Provide event summary information on website and GPSL Yahoo! Group.

Make sure all A/V and other borrowed equipment or supplies is returned to owner

Return funds for any unused tanks of gas.

Balance out the attached financial register and forward balance to next year's host.

Post GPSL Survey on web to solicit feedback.

## Friday's Packing List

- Candy bowls
- Candy
- Projector
- Screen
- Easel
- Name Tags
- Markers
- Money Jar with sign
- DVD/VCR Combo
- Speakers for DVD player
- Laptop with OpenOffice, PowerPoint Viewer, Wireless mouse
- Cell Phone
- Camera
- Video Camera
- Tripod
- Pen and Paper
- Sign-in sheet
- Print out of scheduled flights, callsigns, cellphone numbers
- HT

## Saturday's Packing List

- APRS equipment
- Laptop
- Cell Phone
- Camera
- Video Camera
- Tripod
- Waders
- Helium tanks
- Pen and Paper
- Print out of scheduled flights, callsigns, cellphone numbers
- Beam antenna
- HT
- Airband HT
- Aviation sectionals

## Some Opinions from the GPSL 2006 Survey

People are mixed on when GPSL should be held. About 25% suggested July 4<sup>th</sup>. The other 75% requested sometime in the summer, but not Memorial or Labor Day.

Spousal and Children activities are highly requested, but not very many seem to show up. Most of the spouses in the past few years have come from the EOSS group, and they seem to be self-entertaining.

Most people said to leave the Fri/Sat schedule alone, but if we were to add three days, make it on Thursday. A couple people suggested having a Ballooning 101 set of courses to get new people started. This may be a good use for Thursday afternoon if there was enough interest and we had the resources to present.

A loose, socializing atmosphere was the top pick for Saturday evening's activities. Several suggested that we should have an awards banquet and or flight recaps at the dinner.

Local Dive's are by far preferable to the food chains.

Most people are willing to pay between \$10 and \$20 for the symposium.

Most people are willing to drive 500-750 miles to attend GPSL.

Almost everyone loved having the symposium at "the" hotel. Almost no one was in favor of formalizing it to the point of catering the lunch in though.

Overall, the group liked the Lyons airport as a launch site, but they wished they'd had concrete to fill on, and they wished that the post-flight activities (lunch and dinner) had been more planned out.



## GPSL Financial Register

<i>Date</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Balance</i>
	Balance transfer from previous year	+	
	Meeting Room Rental Fees	-	
	A/V Equipment Fees	-	
	- Projector/Screen	-	
	- Computer	-	
	- DVD/VHS Player	-	
	- Document Camera	-	
	- Microphones	-	
	Catering Fees	-	
	- Water/Tea/Coffee	-	
	- Candies	-	
	- Lunch	-	
	Helium	-	
	- Money from groups	+	
	- Bottle Deposit	-	
	- Cost of Gas	-	
	- Delivery Charges	-	
	Misc Supplies	-	
	- Name Tags/Markers	-	
	Symposium Admission Fees/donations	+	
	Reimbursement to GPSL host	-	
	Balance forward to next year's host		

GPSL Gas Orders

<i>Group</i>	<i>K Tanks</i>	<i>T Tanks</i>	<i>Order Total \$</i>	<i>Money Received (Y/N)</i>
<b>TOTALS</b>				

## GPSL Sign-in Sheet

	<i>Group</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Callsign</i>	<i>Email</i>
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				
19				
20				
21				
22				
23				
24				
25				
26				
27				

	<i>Group</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Callsign</i>	<i>Email</i>
28				
29				
30				
31				
32				
33				
34				
35				
36				
37				
38				
39				
40				
41				
42				
43				
44				
45				
46				
47				
48				
49				
50				
51				
52				
53				
54				

	<i>Group</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Callsign</i>	<i>Email</i>
55				
56				
57				
58				
59				
60				
61				
62				
63				
64				
65				
66				
67				
68				
69				
70				
71				
72				
73				
74				
75				
76				
77				
78				
79				
80				
81				