

Policy Title: Release and Race Transportation Guidelines

Policy Number: AU330

Effective Date: 11-8-06

Last Revision: 7-10-07

Introduction:

It is our members' responsibility to maintain the health, wellbeing and safety of our racing pigeons at all times. Weather, sun, and the geomagnetic fields of the earth all play a role in how our birds navigate, and those forces such as wind, rain, fog, solar activity and geomagnetic disturbances may impact our birds' ability to return home.

The following guidelines are provided to help race committees and liberators make informed race decisions in order to prevent loss of pigeons.

Section 330.01 Weather Conditions: Releases depend on race/distance, air quality, humidity and winds: It is strongly recommended to check the weather along the flight line for signs of any storms or disturbances.

Section 330.02 Temperature Range: When high temperatures are forecast for the course, the pigeons should be released as early in the morning as possible. Since temperature/humidity ranges differ for different parts of the country, specific temperature levels are not defined and left to the liberator's decision.

Section 330.03 Winds: Winds can be associated with weather fronts, storms and tide changes. Releasing in excessive wind conditions should be avoided.

Section 330.04 Visibility: Pigeons are known to use the sun as a navigational aid. Therefore, if it is cloudy, a bright spot in the clouds that indicates where the sun is should always be visible before a release.

It is also recommended that for releases, a ground visibility of at least three (3) miles be present, with a cloud ceiling of at least 1000 ft. Other factors affecting visibility are:

- a. High Clouds. High clouds are acceptable as long as a bright spot indicating the sun's position is visible. Caution should always be used in "solid" overcast conditions.
- b. Low Clouds: May indicate a pending storm or storm front moving into area. Check weather along flight path.
- c. Fog, or haze: Hold release until the fog burns off or until ground visibility and the sun are visible.
- d. Smoke: Smoke and ash can have an adverse affect on the pigeon's eyes, throat and lungs. Releasing pigeons in smoky conditions should always be avoided.

Section 330.05 Rain, Snow and Hail: Releases are permitted in light mist, scattered showers or light snow, providing visibility is at least three (3) miles and the weather is clear or clearing along the flight path.

Attempt to keep the racing birds from flying into severe weather en-route. Check forecasts from reporting stations along the line of flight at the time the birds are expected to be passing through. Try to avoid having the birds encounter heavy rain or snow, thunderstorms, electrical storms, hail, high winds, fog, smoke, and other similar hazards.

Section 330.06 severe weather: Pigeons should never be released during any weather alerts anywhere along the flight path or if a pending storm front is moving into the flight line.

Hold birds, return them, or release short if clear. Examples of severe weather conditions which Racing Pigeons should never be released in are:

- a. Electrical storms
- b. Hurricane conditions
- c. Tornados
- d. Volcanic eruptions

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Section 330.08 Solar activity: The sun is a very important navigational tool for our pigeons. Solar storms affect the earth's geomagnetic fields, which can have an adverse affect on the birds. During times of increased solar activity caution should be used.

Section 330.09 Geographic barriers. It is recommended that birds should not be released at the beginning of any geographic structure such as mountains or lakes that could interfere with the race.

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Section 330.14 Transportation: It is the responsibility of the AU organization to ensure that the vehicle or transportation being used to transport race birds be in good usable and safe condition; both from a mechanical standpoint and being secure and comfortable for the birds. These transportation standards should be met for all races.

A. Shipping Crates: should allow Young birds a minimum of 42 square inches per bird, 45 for old hens, and 48 per old Cock. For two day races, recommended minimums are 52 square inches per old hen and 64 per old cock.

B. Rest: Upon arrival at the release point, it is recommended liberation should allow at least one hour of "rest" prior to releasing the birds. This allows the birds time to rest, drink water and calm down.

C. Release Time: In no event should birds be released before sunrise. The AU recommends birds be held until 30 minutes or more after sunrise.

D. Holdovers: The liberator must always have feed available in case of holdover. The birds should be fed at least once a day. Water should be kept in front of them, including on the day of release.

E. Transport: Transport should be constructed to allow for good ventilation, feeding, and watering of the birds. It is recommended, for health reasons, that water and feeding be administered from outside, at the rear of the crate, where possible. (rev 7-10-07)

F. Liberator: It is recommended that the person releasing the pigeons at the release have no birds in the race, or should have an additional person to help assist and "witness" the release.

G. Watering and feeding: It is recommended that the birds be watered and fed on any two-day transportation-long distance race. On overnight, next morning releases, the birds should be watered prior to release.

H. Ventilation. Crates should be constructed in a way to allow proper ventilation without significant or adverse heat gain to occur when fully loaded.

Section 330.15 Cancelled races. The race schedule, including procedures for changes, shall be established at a regular or special meeting, per rule 5.01. (Rule 5.01 The race schedule, including dates, race stations, closing of races, shipping times, shipping limits and procedures for changes, shall be established at a regular or special business meeting.)

Section 330.16 Race Committees: It is recommended that all AU organizations maintain an official race committee, chaired by the Race Secretary and no less than two (2) other members, to mediate race problems and to backup Race Secretary duties.

Section 330.17 Monitoring Race Conditions: To eliminate most weather concerns, the Race Liberator and Race Secretary should take advantage of as many of the aids that monitor weather conditions as possible, prior to the race. Satellite weather maps, Flight services, Department of Transportation web cams, and Government weather and Solar web sites all have current up to date information available to everyone.