

# LAUNCH TIMELINE

The best weather conditions for balloon launch usually occur at dawn.

Here is an approximate timeline.

## **Launch minus 8 hours**

After a weather and safety briefing, the team inspects the equipment and communications systems, then pulls the boxed balloon and equipment out of the hangar while a separate crew works to clear the runway of dirt, debris and other objects. The capsule and balloon are delivered to the launch area on a cleared runway. More checks and re-verifications are conducted.

## **Launch minus 4:30 hours**

Crew Chief contacts Mission Control for permission to lay out the flight train components. Balloon is laid out on a layer of Herculite. Then balloon, parachute and capsule are connected.

## **Launch minus 2:45 hours**

Layout of flight train is complete.

## **Launch minus 2:15 hours**

Balloon's helium valves are rechecked and verified.

## **Launch minus 1:15 hours**

All capsule checks are complete.

## **Launch minus 1:00 hours**

Crew chief contacts meteorologist and requests permission to begin inflation.

## **Launch minus 0:55 hours**

Inflation begins.

## **Launch minus 0:30 hours**

Felix is sealed in capsule which is cradled on a crane and pressurization begins.

## **Launch minus 0:10 hours**

Inflation is complete.

## **Launch minus 0:05 hours**

Crew chief inspects the entire flight train and removes all safety restraints

## **Launch minus 0:01 hours**

Balloon bubble is released from launch arm.

## **LAUNCH**

As the balloon rises, the crane bearing the capsule drives rapidly down the runway to meet it. The crane releases the capsule when it's vertical with the balloon. The balloon lifts the capsule off the crane and the ascent begins.