
AVIATION SAFETY

CONTEXT

A small private airstrip is located east and adjacent to the southeast portion of the University Community planning area on the east side of the Fairfield Canal. The airstrip is primarily used by nearby farmers to operate “crop-dusting” planes and helicopters. The crop-dusting airplanes using the airstrip to apply dry materials, such as fertilizers and seed, and the helicopters to apply wet materials, such as pesticides and herbicides. During the past several years during the agriculture season, the airport sustains approximately five to six flights per day, but has experienced up to 50 flights per day under peak conditions in the past. Night flights occur only in times of potential frost.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations codified in Title 14 of the CFR are administered at the state level by the Caltrans Division of Aeronautics; however, Caltrans does not specifically regulate agricultural airports. Agricultural aircraft operations are codified in 14 CFR, Part 137. Neither the FAA nor Caltrans regulate land use adjacent to private airports; however, Part 77 of 14 CFR regulations requires FAA agency notification when there is a change in land use that would involve the development of structures and roadways adjacent to the facility. The criterion for notification depends on the height of proposed structures relative to the location of the runway. Upon request of an airstrip property owner, the FAA will conduct an airspace safety review to ensure that building height to distance from airstrip runway ratios comply with FAA and Caltrans safety requirements.

State regulations (CCR Title 21, Division 2.5, Chapter 2) pertaining to personal-use airports contains the following minimum standards, found in Article 5, §3560: the runway length and width must be adequate to enable aircraft to operate safely, considering airport location and the performance data of the most demanding aircraft to utilize the airport; the ends of each runway be at least 200 feet from the airport property line; and the distance from the runway centerline to the property line

of another owner must be at least 50 feet. In addition, Article 2, §3532 of Chapter 2, presents the permit requirements for maintaining and using an agricultural airport. These permit requirements include requirements for both airplanes and helicopters, and include distance requirements for operation of airstrips within boundaries of K–12 public and private schools.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

Goal

Community compatibility and safety with the adjacent private airstrip.

Objective

AS 1.0

To define standards and procedures to ensure the compatibility of the University Community’s urban development with adjoining airstrips.

Policies

AS 1.1

Require that development in the University Community maintains airspace safety and distance ratio requirements established by the Federal Aviation Administration and the Caltrans Division of Aeronautics as long as the airstrip adjacent to the University Community remains operational. (*Imp 2.5, 2.7*)