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ADVISORY CIRCULAR

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

SUBJECT: RUNWAY CATEGORIZATION - AERONAUTICAL STUDIES -
AIRPORT OWNERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

1. PURPOSE. This advisory circular emphasizes the need for airport owners to maintain runway and approach zone categories and locations on file with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) which reflect existing and planned development so that airports may be afforded the appropriate consideration of Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) Part 77.
 2. REFERENCES.
 - a. The latest issuance of the following publications may be obtained from the Department of Transportation, Distribution Unit, TAD-484.3, Washington, D.C. 20590. Advisory Circular 00-2, updated triannually, contains the listing of all current issuances of these circulars and changes thereto.
 1. AC 00-2, Federal Register Advisory Circular Checklist and Status of Regulations.
 2. AC 150/5000-3, Address List for Regional Airports Divisions and Airports District Offices.
 - b. The following publications may be purchased from the Superintendent of Documents, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Make check or money order payable to the Superintendent of Documents; no c.o.d. orders are accepted.
 1. Volume XI - Federal Aviation Regulations Part 77, Objects Affecting Navigable Airspace (\$5.00).
 2. Federal Aviation Administration's AC 150/5070-6, Airport Master Plans (\$1.25).
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3. BACKGROUND. In determining whether a proposed construction or alteration in the vicinity of an airport is an obstruction to air navigation according to the standards of FAR Part 77, the FAA considers the effect of the construction or alteration on runway utilization. This is based on the FAR Part 77 runway and approach zone category and geographical location as contained in a FAA or military service planning document. The information contained in the planning document often does not reflect the ultimate planned development of the runway. Consequently, the resulting FAA determination may permit offsite development which will inhibit, if not prevent, subsequent runway development. A need exists then for airport owners to ensure that runway and approach zone categories and locations are correctly and promptly documented to the FAA.
4. RUNWAY CATEGORIES. FAR Part 77 contains runway and associated approach zone dimensional standards. Although these standards are not repeated here, the following categories used for runways and approach zones in FAR Part 77 determinations are listed to acquaint the reader with the range of designations in use:
 - a. Visual utility.
 - b. Visual larger-than-utility.
 - c. Nonprecision instrument utility.
 - d. Nonprecision instrument larger-than-utility (minimums greater than 3/4 mile).
 - e. Nonprecision instrument larger-than-utility (minimums as low as 3/4 mile).
 - f. Precision instrument.
5. CONSIDERATIONS IN RUNWAY CATEGORIZATION. The category assigned each end of an airport runway should reflect the ultimate planned development of that runway end as currently foreseen. At many locations, it may be extremely difficult to forecast the airport usage and type of aircraft operations beyond five years. However, where a publicly used airport is involved, prudent planning dictates consideration for future establishment of one or more instrument approach procedures. Airport owners are encouraged to consult with the FAA for assistance in forecasting airport development.

6. RESPONSIBILITY FOR DOCUMENTATION OF RUNWAY CATEGORY AND LOCATION. The responsibility for documenting the ultimate FAR Part 77 runway and approach zone categories as well as the existing and planned location of runway ends rests with the airport owner. This documentation should reflect a coordinated planning effort involving the various airport users. It should be noted that the FAA is not obligated to concur with an airport owner's forecast of the ultimate planned runway development and category. Nevertheless, it is to the airport owner's advantage to document his plans to the FAA so that the portion of planned development which does receive FAA concurrence may be given the appropriate FAR Part 77 consideration.
7. DOCUMENTATION OF RUNWAY CATEGORY AND LOCATION.
 - a. The category and location of each runway are usually presented in the FAA approved airport layout plan. Chapter 7 of Advisory Circular 150/5070-6, Airport Master Plans, describes the components of this plan. The key features shown which affect FAR Part 77 determinations are the positive dimensioning and configuration of airfield facilities and runway approach zones. FAR Part 77 should be consulted for the dimensional standards to be shown on the airport layout plan.
 - b. Other FAA or military planning documents which contain the data described in paragraph 7a may be used for documentation.
 - c. As a means of prompt notification to the FAA of an impending proposed change to an airport layout plan involving runway development and/or recategorization, or for the case where no airport layout plan exists, the documentation to the FAA may be by official letter from the airport owner. The letter should include data on the geographical location and elevation of any new runway or runway extension. Inclusion of a plan or detailed sketch showing this information and the locations of approach zones is desirable.
8. REVISION OF RUNWAY INFORMATION. Changes proposed by the airport owner to runway category or development should be documented to the FAA as soon as possible so that appropriate consideration may be given any revised FAR Part 77 surface.
9. FAA CONTACT OFFICES. Advisory Circular 150/5000-3, Address List for Regional Airports Divisions and Airports District Offices, contains the address of the nearest FAA Airports District Office available to assist airport owners in airport development matters.

10. HOW TO GET THIS PUBLICATION. Additional copies of this Advisory Circular, AC 150/5320-11, Runway Categorization - Aeronautical Studies - Airport Owners' Responsibilities, may be obtained from the Department of Transportation, Distribution Unit, TAD-484.3, Washington, D.C. 20590.

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