

TRUCKEE TAHOE AIRPORT DISTRICT POLICY INSTRUCTION

PI NUMBER: 515 (revised)

Effective: May 25, 2016

Revised: November 29, 2017

Revised: June 28, 2023

SUBJECT: Community Annoyance Comment Processing Procedures

Purpose:

The Truckee Tahoe Airport District, (District) recognizes that aviation activity has potential to create annoyance in communities within District boundaries. The District shall take reasonable and appropriate action to respond and make efforts to resolve instances of community annoyance. This Policy Instruction, in conjunction with all other applicable District Policies and Instructions, outlines the strategies and protocols by which staff receives, reports, and processes instances of community annoyance.

Annoyance is subjective. The types of activity and thresholds which trigger irritation are individual and personal. The scope of this policy shall be *noise* and *safety*. Noise and safety alone don't define annoyance but they are observable and reportable. The District defines Community Annoyance as irritation associated with either *noise* or *safety* resulting from aircraft activity within the District boundaries. Accordingly, the District maintains records of all instances of community annoyance and makes regular reports to the Board of Directors in a public forum.

As a steward of public trust and monies, responsibility to District stakeholders is paramount to fulfilling the obligations of the District's Mission Statement. Commenters shall receive an objective ear, an open mind, and a vigorous effort on their behalf to find solutions. All commenters and aircraft operators shall be treated with dignity and respect, and the District requires the same in return. Staff will use District-published Noise Abatement Procedures and active initiatives as a guide for evaluating comments.

Noise Abatement Procedures and Compliance:

Where possible and consistent with safety, Noise Abatement Procedures direct aircraft over major roadways and railways, a widely accepted practice to collocate areas of noise. Highways mask noise, and the District has determined that shared use of these corridors helps contain the overall effect. Further, the use of such routes has potential to reduce the overflight of many nearby residential areas. Where no major roadway route exists, the District requests overflight of unpopulated or lesser-populated areas.

The Truckee Tahoe Airport District recognizes that many factors influence the actual flight path and altitude of aircraft, including wind, density altitude, traffic, operation of Air Traffic Control, airfield conditions and that Noise Abatement Procedures are voluntary. It is a fact that residential communities near the airport and along major roadways are and will be impacted by aircraft overflight. The Airport aims to minimize adverse impacts and requests that operators use best practices to support that goal. Aircraft operating at KTRK under VFR conditions are responsible to see and avoid other traffic and are encouraged to understand our Noise Abatement Procedures. Other aircraft fly FAA-designed Instrument Procedures. Operators who elect to use Instrument Procedures must follow narrowly defined paths that are federally regulated to enhance safety but are unrelated to Noise Abatement. Those procedures may be flown by choice at any time and may or may not be co-located with specific noise abatement procedures.

A metric of compliance has benefit to gauge the effectiveness of Noise Abatement Procedures, however the District understands that a compliant operation may still generate community annoyance. A record of the comment shall be retained regardless of compliance. Since development and roadway infrastructures as well as governing bodies of the Airport District change over time, this policy shall reference the most current Noise Abatement Procedures and initiatives as the primary method to determine compliance. While the Airport makes efforts to influence flight behavior it also recognizes that the FAA is the sole governmental authority of aircraft in flight. The Airport District also recognizes that Noise Abatement Procedures should be compliant with published FAA instrument and published visual procedures since the FAA is the sole governmental authority of aircraft in flight.

Protocols:

Community members may initiate the process of reporting annoyance at any time. The Airport phone system, website, and staff may be utilized to file a comment. Per commenter preference, Airport staff will attempt to reply to a commenter via the same method a comment was received. Once the details of the annoyance are clearly understood, staff will confirm the receipt of the comment to the commenter if requested and may begin an investigation.

To ensure due process, the investigation may consider circumstances relevant to the complaint and flight operation. Tools and protocols to measure operations at the Truckee Tahoe Airport may be used to determine the geospatial location of an aircraft in flight and the proximity in distance and time to the comment location. The investigation may commence to define the specific details surrounding the annoyance. The outcome of this investigation may determine whether the operation was compliant with currently published noise abatement procedures and whether staff makes outreach to the aircraft operator with the aim of affecting future operations to mitigate potential community annoyance.

Investigation Outcomes:

~~Although compliant operations do not warrant outreach, staff may make outreach if possible annoyance reductions may be realized. Although compliant operations shall not automatically receive outreach, staff may elect to make outreach if possible annoyance reductions may be realized.~~—Repeated outreach by staff on compliant operations may disrupt effective communication between the Airport and aircraft operators. In certain instances where repeated, excessive, or a disproportionate level of comments are generated from a single household, the General Manager is authorized to modify comment response protocols to best fit the needs of an individual commenter and available District staff resources. Modifications to protocols may involve airport visits and meetings by commenter, field visits to commenter’s residence or business. The intent is to apply the appropriate amount of District resources to the annoyance and fairly address all constituents.

Non-compliant operations including but not limited to: arrivals, and departures, training maneuvers and operations during the voluntary curfew of 10pm – 7am, will result in operator outreach. Some exceptions may be made case by case, however staff intends to reach out to every operator who performs a non-compliant operation. Effective outreach to operators for non-compliant operations must offer a viable and safe alternative for future operations. Operator outreach shall be handled the same as annoyance comments, with an objective ear, open mind, and with vigorous effort to find solutions.

Any investigation which indicates a violation of 14 CFR Federal Aviation Regulations or hazardous operations shall be recorded as a safety concern within the District’s Safety Management System and staff will make appropriate outreach or request an investigation by the FAA.

Beyond Single-Event Based Annoyance:

Even with the best possible outcomes and 100% compliance of Noise Abatement Procedures, peak operations periods generate community annoyance calls based on the frequency of operations and overall tempo of activity. The Airport recognizes that as a transportation facility located in a resort destination, it is subject to the same trends in traffic as all other area transportation entities. Summer peak seasons and winter holiday periods tend to generate comments based on the tempo of activity. These comments shall be maintained and reported within the existing framework.

Summary of Instruction:

1. Comments and outreach efforts shall be recorded, and a routine report shall be presented to the Board of Directors in a public meeting.
2. Community annoyance comments will receive a reply. All comments shall be recorded in a database maintained by staff.

3. If it is determined a commenter makes numerous and/or repetitive comments about compliant or non-compliant operations, the Director of Aviation may modify comment response protocols to meet the needs of the commenter and the District.

Kat Rohlf, Board President