



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation
Administration**

Advisory Circular

Subject: ESTABLISHMENT OF AIRPORT
ACTION GROUPS

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Change:

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1. PURPOSE. This advisory circular (AC) has been developed to encourage and provide guidance on the establishment of airport action groups.
 2. APPLICATION. This material is advisory in nature and intended to promote and provide helpful suggestions to airport officials; users and airport tenants; community businessmen and leaders; civic organizations; and the general public for establishing action groups to increase community support for airports and the aviation industry.
 3. RELATED READING MATERIAL. Information on FAA airport offices is listed in AC 150/5000-3, Address List for Regional Airport Divisions and Airport District/Field Offices, current edition. This AC may be obtained from the U.S. Department of Transportation, Utilization and Storage Section, M-443.2, Washington, DC 20590. Information on helping your airport is contained in the National Business Aircraft Association's (NBAA) Public Relations Manual, Chapters 4-8, and can be obtained from NBAA at 1200 18th Street, NW., Washington, DC 20036.
 4. DISCUSSION.
 - a. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) encourages and strongly supports the establishment of action groups that actively participate in promoting the benefits of airports and aviation to the community and in working toward enhancing airport safety. Because of local concerns involving noise, safety, land development, tax revenues, etc., the airport in many communities is at best an ignored commodity and at worst, the subject of considerable hostility and opposition to either its continued existence or to any attempts at improvement or expansion. Such opposition and indifference can often lead to its eventual closure.
 - b. In many cases, opponents and detractors of an airport are all too visible and vocal while the users and benefactors are relatively docile and silent. This is particularly detrimental at planning meetings and public hearings where future operations, development, and financial commitments are discussed and decisions made. It is common for those individuals and organizations opposing the airport to pool their financial resources and collective political influence whereas the users and supporters of the airport often sit by while airport officials alone must defend the need for airport improvements.
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c. The creation of airport action groups can help balance the scales against airport opponents by being in a better position to demonstrate to communities the diversified role and economic and social importance of an airport. These groups can also assist the airport operator in advising the public of the role the airport fulfills in the community and promoting aviation in general.

5. TYPES OF ACTION GROUPS. There are several types of support groups with slightly different objectives but all concerned primarily with the promotion of safety and economic viability of the airport. These types include:

a. Airport community support councils and committees organized to promote the economic benefits of an airport and proposed airport improvements. They can be of local interest involving a single airport or can be area-wide encompassing a system of airports.

b. Airport safety committees organized to enhance the safety of an airport and to reduce the potential for future hazards.

c. Friends of the airport, e.g., community organizations and civic groups that from time to time volunteer to undertake short term projects to enhance the beauty, safety, acceptance, or compatibility of the airport with the neighboring environment.

6. PARTICIPATION. Membership in airport action groups can be recruited from a very wide and diversified spectrum of the community. They may include individuals or representatives of organizations, firms, civic groups, etc. The one common characteristic is a recognition of the importance of the community benefits derived from a viable, safe, well-run and efficient airport. Suggested prospects include:

- a. Individuals now or formerly employed in aviation;
- b. Airport officials and employees of the airport;
- c. Fixed-base operators, airline representatives, commercial airport operators, and other tenants of the airport;
- d. Pilots and members of flying clubs and the Civil Air Patrol;
- e. Officials of firms and businesses utilizing the airport;
- f. Government employees and officials (as permitted by order or regulation);
- g. Representatives of chambers of commerce;
- h. Representatives of national and local aviation organizations;
- i. Military personnel;
- j. Civic organizations;

k. Retired persons, especially ex-pilots.

7. ESTABLISHING AN ACTION GROUP. Anyone with sufficient initiative and motivation, including those with very limited experience, can provide the necessary impetus to establish an action group. The following are some recommended steps that one might follow in establishing such an organization.

a. Contact the airport manager and appropriate airport officials to discuss your ideas and to seek advice, assistance, and initial support. Early contact and cooperation with the airport manager is extremely important in defining the role of the organization and avoiding initial misunderstandings. This meeting can be very productive also for identifying prospective members.

b. Recruit a relatively small group of people that share your motivation and interests to plan the purposes, objectives, membership, and structure of the initial organization. Also, assign work tasks to set the groundwork for the initial organizational meeting. As a minimum, work tasks should include a meeting agenda, publicity, and recruitment.

c. At the initial meeting, establish an organizational committee with an elected chairman and vice-chairman. Name subcommittees for required tasks, including the establishment of by-laws. Assign someone to keep the minutes of the meeting. Before adjourning, establish a date, time, and place for the next meeting.

d. By-laws should include provisions for a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and a board of directors responsible for the various interests and activities. Standing and special committees, each with a chairman, would be established to carry out all the various tasks.

e. The structure of the organization should be subject to change as it grows in membership and responsibilities, and its role and character evolve. A future expanded role of a local action group might include participation in an area-wide council which serves as an "umbrella" organization for the coordination, promotion, and political support of aviation activities and airports within a particular region. Large councils or groups may be incorporated as nonprofit tax-exempt associations in accordance with the local laws. For area councils that include several airports, participating groups should remain independent with representatives on the council.

8. ACTIVITIES. Airport action groups participate in a wide diversity of activities, only limited by the imagination and motivation of their membership. Any action that promotes aviation or helps an airport is open for consideration. Some general and more frequent examples include:

a. Community Support. The participating, reviewing, and backing of airport master planning efforts, airport development projects, environmental impact and noise abatement studies. Airport local action groups should attend and participate in public hearings and other forums to voice community benefits from an airport and to oppose adverse airport/aviation proposals.

b. Safety. All phases of accident prevention and safety, such as obstruction removal, pavement repair, vehicular hazards, signage, nav aids, improved maintenance, safety areas, air traffic control (ATC) procedures, etc.

c. Promotion. Providing public relations, newspaper articles, commercials, literature, etc., to publicize airport benefits. Also, supplying volunteer greeters and information desks at the airports.

d. Special Events. Airport open houses, air shows, contests, fly-ins, etc.

e. Education. Encouragement of aviation studies and training. Providing speakers at schools.

f. Emergency Planning. Participation and support for airport emergency plans and drills for fires, crashes, natural disasters, and terrorist actions.

g. Airport Beautification. Providing volunteers and financial resources for airport beautification, landscaping, grass cutting, painting, clearing approaches, etc.

h. Search and Rescue. Volunteer participation in search and rescue operations and in providing resources for Civil Air Patrol (CAP) activities.

9. SAFETY COMMITTEES.

a. A safety committee is a very specialized form of local action group. Although safety committees can and often do undertake activities designed to promote community support, their primary objective is the enhancement of safety on the airport and improving the overall efficiency of airport operations.

b. A safety committee can provide airport management with considerable support and assistance in correcting deficiencies and in resolving operational problems and conflicts. Hence, if such a committee currently does not exist on the airport, airport officials are wise to supply the impetus for its establishment.

c. Membership in a safety committee generally should include representatives of airport management, managers of FAA facilities (when located on the airport), and major tenants and users of the airport. This latter group usually includes airlines, commercial aircraft operators, fixed-base operators, pilot groups, resident industries, freight operators, etc. If military units are located on the airport, their representatives should also be included.

d. Meetings on the airport should be scheduled on a regular basis and at a time most convenient to the majority of the major users and tenants to assure maximum participation.

e. Meetings should address problems and deficiencies or suggestions on airport improvements or development issues. Discussions might address subjects such as inadequate runway/taxiway signing, planned new development, poor maintenance and/or services, Notice to Airmen requirements, ATC procedures, runway incursions, obstruction removal and/or marking and lighting, etc. Meetings should not be allowed to degenerate into complaint sessions but firm agendas should be established and specific topics addressed and solutions and follow-up actions recorded. Individuals and subcommittees should be assigned work tasks when problems and conflicts cannot immediately be resolved or where long-term solutions are necessary. Agendas should also include follow-up reports on on-going or completed actions.

10. EXAMPLES OF ORGANIZED ACTIVITIES. The following are examples of very successful community support group efforts to promote local airport or aviation activities. Obviously, many other examples could be cited that are equally impressive. Other examples may be added in future revisions. These are included merely for illustration purposes.

a. In 1974, a group of business and civic leaders concerned with the future of aviation in Orange County of California formed the Community Airport Council to offset strong negative pressures on the then-named Orange County Airport. At that time, political actions by a group of airport opponents resulted in heavy restrictions being placed on the use of the airport. Other detractors were proposing to eliminate the airport altogether. Since that time, the council has been the county's strongest advocate for aviation progress. Its many activities on behalf of aviation and the airport include: continuing study of aviation growth requirements; providing qualified speakers for airport and civic functions; and appearances before government agency hearings and at public meetings. Since 1974 the environment for aviation in Orange County has markedly improved. The progress and future of John Wayne Airport now seems reasonably assured. A key role of the council will be to "watchdog" the planning, construction, and operational phases of forthcoming airport development. This group is now part of a coalition to select a site for a second airport in Orange County. The council is now called "Orange County Aviation Council." The address is 1055 N. Main Street, Suite 435, Santa Anna, California 92701. For any additional information, such as funding, personnel, etc., contact Mr. Joseph E. Irvine, Director.

*b. In support of the Eastern Regional Jetport at Kinston, North Carolina, the Lenoir County Chamber of Commerce Aviation Committee has 25 members who volunteered their expertise. These civic-minded persons handle many chores--petitions, public hearings, lobbying, speaking to service groups, beautification, promoting and sponsoring aviation day, writing public service articles, and helping with the concerns of general aviation. These tasks normally would be handled "in-house" at larger airports by salaried employees. Monthly meetings of the aviation committee are heavily attended. The committee also serves as a "watchdog" sending representatives to all airport meetings.

11. RECOGNITION.

a. The FAA considers the establishment of airport community support groups and safety committees to be a highly effective way to preserve and enhance our national system of airports and urges local organizations and individuals to make this a high priority initiative. In recognition of its importance, FAA will initiate a program of awarding certificates to these groups and to individuals, civic organizations, volunteer groups, etc., that have achieved significant accomplishments or have contributed services, support, or performed other activities that reflected beneficially on the airport and aviation in general.

b. To be issued a certificate of recognition, an organization, volunteer group, or individual must be nominated by an airport or local/state official or the Federal Aviation Administration. Such a nomination should be addressed to the nearest FAA airport district office or to the regional office having jurisdiction over the airport. The nomination should include the necessary endorsement and a paragraph describing the organization's or individual's activities meriting special recognition.

12. REQUEST FOR INFORMATION. FAA airport district or regional offices are available to answer any questions. If more information is needed, please contact the Manager, Safety and Compliance Division, Office of Airport Standards, 800 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20591, (202) 267-3053.



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