

As one of the nation's busiest international airports, in one of the nation's most desirable locations, San Francisco International Airport (SFO) has always taken its obligation to balance economic and environmental interests seriously. **For more than twenty years, SFO has been at the forefront of noise abatement activities nationally** developing both policies and programs to minimize the impact of aircraft operations on surrounding neighborhoods. The measurable benefits achieved by these programs can be credited to SFO's policy of maintaining a collaborative relationship with elected officials and the general public.

Aircraft Noise Abatement Office **accomplishments** and **history**

measurable benefits

Since the first set of noise abatement regulations were adopted in 1978, SFO has drastically reduced the impact of noise on residential areas through use of over-water flight tracks, the introduction of quieter aircraft, special regulations for night operations, and an extensive residential soundproofing program. The following highlights demonstrate the effectiveness of these programs:

- ▶ At the beginning of 2000, the number of people residing within the 65 db CNEL (the area defined as experiencing significant aircraft noise) had dropped 91% from 35,100 in 1976 to 3,298.
- ▶ The area within the 65 db CNEL has been greatly reduced from 2.2 square miles in 1986 to three quarters of a square mile in 1999.
- ▶ Since 1983, SFO has spent \$153 million to insulate more than 15,000 homes, 8 churches and 7 schools against aircraft noise.
- ▶ Over the past twenty years, passengers at SFO have increased 23% from 30 to 37 million.
- ▶ SFO offers non-stop links with more than 30 international points on 22 international carriers. The average weekly number of non-stop international flights out of SFO is 417.
- ▶ In 2008 SFO was named the Best Airport in North America based on passenger survey results by Skytrax, the aviation industry's leading independent quality research organization.
- ▶ Also in 2008 SFO won an EPA Award for Environmental Programs, particularly in the areas of recycling and waste management. SFO has an almost 90% recycling rate and is pursuing additional lighting and HVAC retrofits and installation of more than 50,000 square feet of solar panels.

historic firsts

First Part 150 Study

In 1983, SFO was the first airport in the country to prepare a comprehensive noise abatement and land use compatibility plan. Taking advantage of Federal Aviation Regulation Part 150 allowed SFO to be an early recipient of noise compatibility funds, which translated into the Noise Insulation Program.

First Phase Out of Noisier Aircraft in the U.S.

Prior to any federal regulations on the subject, SFO promulgated its own airport rule phasing out older, noisier aircraft by 2000. Subsequently the FAA adopted a similar nationwide policy. The milestone date of January 1, 2000 saw the completion of that phase-out.

Because of SFO's aggressive restrictions on certain types of older, noisier aircraft, the federal government withheld over \$70 million dollars in grants between 1986 and 1993. These grants, to which the airport would otherwise have been entitled, would have come from airline passenger and user fees.

Land Use Compatibility Zones

As a result of efforts by SFO, surrounding communities have preserved industrial areas under flight paths. Specifically, the Shoreline noise mitigation area, an industrial zone used as a noise abatement departure route, was feeling the pressure of residential developers. SFO was successful in arguing that this important route be maintained as industrial to protect residents along the Mt. San Bruno gap area.

First Aircraft Identification System

SFO installed its first noise monitoring system in 1975. Since that time it has been regularly updated, improved and expanded with higher quality computer and software technology. In 1987, SFO installed the first passive aircraft identification system allowing the airport to correlate noise events and complaints to individual flight operations and aircraft types. In 1991 and 1999 the system was upgraded again. It currently operates 29 noise monitoring sites located in communities surrounding the airport.

Finest Collaborative Community Process

As a participant and supporter of the Airport/Community Roundtable, SFO has fostered a productive working relationship with surrounding communities. One of the oldest and most respected airport/community forums in the nation, the Roundtable develops an annual work plan to establish new mitigation programs and monitor existing ones. The airport provides financial and staff support to the Roundtable whose meetings serve as public forums on noise reduction.

how to reach us

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