1. AICUZ PROGRAM

1.1 What is AICUZ?

The Air Installations Compatible Use Zones (AICUZ) program is a Department of Defense (DoD) discretionary program designed to promote development compatible with military flight operations. DoD Instruction 4165.57 establishes the AICUZ program which is similar to the Federal Aviation Administration's Federal Aviation Regulation Part 150 program for civil airports. AICUZ is a land use planning program not a land acquisition or land management program.

1.2 What is the purpose of the AICUZ Program?

The purpose is twofold: 1) to promote the public health and safety through the local adoption of compatible land use controls, and 2) to protect the operational capability of the air installation. The AICUZ program achieves these goals by promoting community growth that is compatible with the airfield operations.

1.3 Why was the AICUZ program developed?

The Department of Defense developed the AICUZ program in response to increased urban development around military airfields. The Air Force built most of their air bases in the late 1940's and early 1950's in locations well away from urban population centers. Since then, urban growth has gradually moved closer towards the boundaries of many installations. Incompatible land usage may result in complaints or increased safety concerns over the effects of aircraft operations, leading to operational changes, which in many cases, adversely affect the flying mission.

1.4 How did the AICUZ program get started?

In 1971, the Air Force initiated the Greenbelt concept to address the problem of increasing incompatible development (encroachment) around airfields. Although the Greenbelt's generalized rectangle of two and one-half miles beyond the runway end and one mile on each side provided a beginning, it was not an accurate measure for compatible land use development. In 1972, the Air Force created the AICUZ program to replace the Greenbelt concept. In the early part of 1973, the AICUZ program continued to undergo refinements. By October 1973, the Department of Defense created a more sophisticated AICUZ methodology which led to Air Force's current AICUZ program.

1.5 What does AICUZ do?

AICUZ assists local, state and federal officials in protecting the health, safety and welfare of civilians and military by encouraging compatible land use while ensuring that the incompatible development does not affect the defense mission. It also helps to reduce noise impacts caused by aircraft operations while meeting operational, training and flight safety requirements, both on and near air installations.

1.6 What are AICUZ studies?

AICUZ studies are advisory planning documents the Air Force prepares to assist local governments in land use planning near air installations and manage development. Installations use these studies to provide land-use recommendations for communities to incorporate into their planning regulations to prevent encroachment. AICUZ is advisory. The Air Force can make recommendations but local communities are responsible for controlling land use.

1.7 How are AICUZ studies prepared?

Planning and acoustic contractors prepare AICUZ studies with consideration of past and projected changes in mission, aircraft, flight paths and operational levels as well as current and projected community land use. AICUZ studies analyze the effects of aircraft noise, aircraft accident potential, and make land use development recommendations. Since the AICUZ is only advisory, the Air Force works in collaboration with its neighbors to achieve development compatible with flight operations.

1.8 Does the local government have a say in compatible use zones?

The AICUZ Program promotes collaboration between the Air Force and local governments and other stakeholders. Although the military can serve in an advisory capacity, local governments control development beyond installation boundaries. By working together through the AICUZ program, the Air Force can work with communities to identify mutually beneficial opportunities to achieve compatible development.

1.9 How often are AICUZ studies prepared?

As the Department of Defense aircraft fleet mix and training requirements change over time, the resulting flight operations change as well. These changes can affect noise contours and necessitate an AICUZ Study update. Additionally, non-operational changes, such as noise modeling methods and a local community's land use, may also require the need for an update. The Air Force uses planning contours to reasonably foresee any possible changes to the aircraft mission over the next five to 10 years. This allows communities some stability in their long range planning efforts. Planning contours are not pre-decisional, but, as planning documents, are reasonable representations of future operations. Any actual decisions to bed down a new aircraft or make other significant operational changes will be subject to analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act.

1.10 How does the AICUZ program benefit local communities?

AICUZ supports compatible development and presents communities with guidelines for development that is compatible in high noise and accident potential zones. This encourages long range planning that not only helps to protect the health, safety and welfare of our neighbors from the effects of aircraft operations but allows the Air Force to plan its operations to reduce noise impacts where possible while meeting operational, training and flight safety requirements, both on and near air installations.

1.11 What is the origin and basis of the AICUZ land use guidelines for noise?

The AICUZ land use guidelines for noise were originally based on an adaptation of two documents: the Bolt, Beranek and Newman (BBN) study entitled, "Noise Exposure Forecasts: Evolution, Extensions and Land Use Interpretations" and the Department of Housing and Urban Development's 1972 document, "Aircraft Noise Impact Planning Guidelines for Local Agencies." These standards were further refined using the results of other airport land use studies and Air Force analyses.

Since that time, the Federal Interagency Committee on Urban Noise published its "Guidelines for Considering Noise in Land Use Planning and Control" in June 1980. This committee included of representatives from five federal departments: The Environmental Protection Agency, Transportation, Defense, Department of Veteran Affairs, and Housing and Urban Development. The guidelines represent the committee's consensus on federal guidelines for considering noise in land use planning.

1.12 What is the basis for AICUZ implementation?

AICUZ promotes compatible development around military installations; it provides land use recommendations that assess the effects of aircraft noise and the potential for aircraft accidents. AICUZ recommends that noise sensitive land uses be sited outside of the high noise zones and that people-density is limited in areas subject to accident potential. As such, the basis for communities to implement AICUZ recommendations lies in the exercising of land use regulation powers of local and State governments to protect and promote the public health, safety, and welfare.

1.13 Who implements the AICUZ recommendations?

The appropriate local governmental entity designated by state law implements the AICUZ study recommendations through planning, zoning and/or other land use controls. The Air Force prepares the AICUZ study based on analysis of its aircraft flight and maintenance operations and submits its recommendations to the local government for its consideration, adoption and implementation.

1.14 How are the AICUZ recommendations implemented?

AICUZ implementation is a collaborative effort between the Air Force and its neighbors. The Air Force presents the AICUZ study to the local governments for consideration in their land use planning efforts. These local agencies normally implement AICUZ recommendations through the adoption of local land use controls (i.e., zoning, building codes, comprehensive plans, etc.). The program relies primarily on the voluntary actions of the local communities to consider AICUZ recommendations in their planning process. The installation also follows AICUZ guidelines on base to the maximum extent possible. The Air Force should site new construction on the installation in compatible land use areas. In circumstances when it's not feasible, incorporate appropriate sound attenuation in the design and construction for structures in the high noise zone and limit population density within the facilities built in the APZs.

1.15 What are the Air Force's responsibilities to its neighbors under the AICUZ program?

The Air Force is responsible for conducting an active AICUZ program to foster compatible land use with neighboring communities by:

- Minimizing the adverse effects of Air Force aircraft operations on people and activities;
- Providing planning information and studies to local, regional, state and federal agencies for use in formulating their land use development decisions;
- Engaging in a cooperative land use planning process; and
- Keeping the public aware of unusual operations occurring at the base.

2. ACCIDENT POTENTIAL ZONES

2.1 What is the origin and basis of the AICUZ land use guidelines for accident potential?

When the AICUZ program first began, there were no comprehensive studies on the potential for aircraft accidents or the location of aircraft accidents in relationship to land use. In 1973, the Air Force conducted a study of major Air Force aircraft accidents that occurred between 1968-1972 and were within 10 nautical miles of its airfields. An analysis of 369 accidents revealed that 75 percent of the aircraft accidents occurred on or adjacent to the runway (1,000 feet to each side of the runway centerline) and in a corridor 3000' (1500' either side of runway centerline) feet wide, extending from the runway threshold along the extended runway centerline for a distance of 15,000 feet.

The DoD established three zones based on accident debris patterns and the percent of aircraft accidents occurring in each zone. These zones are the Clear Zone, Accident Potential Zone I and Accident Potential Zone II. The zones are 3000 feet wide, centered on the runway centerline and extending from the end of the runway. The Clear Zone is 3000 feet long. Accident Potential Zone I extends from the end of the Clear Zone and is 5000 feet long. Accident Potential Zone II extends from the end of Accident Potential Zone I and is 7000 feet long. This DoD used this data to formulate land use compatibility guidelines types and densities.

The military incorporated these zones and the land use criteria into Air Force and Department of Defense policy. The Air Force study was the first significant effort in this area since 1952 when the President's Airport Commission published “The Airport and Its Neighbors”, better known as the “Doolittle Report”. The recommendations of this study were influential in the formulation of the accident potential zone concept. The Air Force conducted a new study of aircraft accidents in 1999 that covered 15 years (1984 – 1998). Combined with data from the original study, the cumulative percentages of aircraft accidents in the previously defined accident zones were nearly the same.

3. NOISE

3.1 What is noise?

Noise is unwanted sound, because it interferes with activities that require a quiet environment. It is important to recognize that perceptions of sound and noise are closely associated with human sensitivities including sound expectation, frequency of events, personal opinions about the source of the sound, along with other factors. For example, some people like the sound of an aircraft flying overhead, it may bother others, just as some people like loud music and other people consider it a nuisance. While not all people perceive certain types of sound the same, for many, sound becomes noise when it causes speech interference, sleep disturbance or hearing loss, or structural damage occurs. Sounds can be difficult to categorize as noise.

3.2 How will you analyze the noise?

The Air Force models aircraft noise near airfields using a program called NOISEMAP. Modeling allows us to determine the noise impacts of aircraft, both existing as well as proposed at _____AFB. We base the modeling on a library of noise from actual measurements of the aircraft. Using these measurements, an acoustical professional will model the affected environment based upon air traffic control tower and pilot interviews, local environmental conditions such as weather, topography, terrain, and flight operations tempo and aircraft fleet mix to produce the noise contours. You will be able to see the contours in the draft EIS and make comments if you wish.

3.3 Why is noise evaluated?

The Air Force evaluates noise to determine environmental effects of mission changes and to assist local, regional, state and federal agencies in promoting land use compatibility.

The Noise Control Act of 1972 established a national policy "to promote an environment for all Americans free from noise that jeopardizes their public health and welfare." However, because military noise is a by-product of weapons used to train for national defense, Congress exempted military weapons being regulated as a product as defined by the Noise Control Act. Despite the exemption, in practice, all services have had a long-standing policy to work to minimize the public's exposure to high noise levels.

3.4 What is "DNL"?

DNL is the acronym for the Day Night Average Sound Level. DNL is the average sound level exposure, measured in decibels, over a 24-hour period with a 10-decibel penalty added to sound levels for noise events occurring between 10 PM and 7 AM. The 10-decibel penalty for nighttime noise events accounts for the added intrusiveness of noises when background levels are low and noise sensitive activities (such as sleeping) take place. DNL directly relates to the number of aircraft over-flights, the flight performance profile of each aircraft, and the time of day when each over-flight occurs.

The calculations for noise measurements uses a logarithmic scale; therefore doubling or cutting in half the number of overflights results in only a 3-decibel change in the overall DNL. It does not double the DNL value. Through various scientific studies – a 3-decibel change in noise level has shown to be barely detectable for most people.

3.4A What is "CNEL"?

CNEL is the acronym for Community Noise Equivalent Level. California adopted the use of CNEL prior to FAA adopting DNL and continues to use CNEL as their metric of choice. Similar to DNL, CNEL is the average sound level exposure measured in decibels over a 24-hour period. However, CNEL accounts for increased human sensitivity to noise at night (10 dB penalty), as well as in the evening. CNEL places a 5-dB penalty to events that occur between 7 PM and 10 PM which account for annoyance to residents that are outdoors or have their windows open during this timeframe. Additionally, CNEL contours display the 60 dB noise contour, unlike DNL noise contours.

3.5 Why does the Air Force use DNL or CNEL to describe the noise environment?

In 1974, following the Noise Control Act of 1972, the Administrator of the EPA recommended that all federal agencies adopt the Day Night Average Sound Level (DNL) noise descriptor system. Shortly thereafter, the Air Force and EPA agreed upon an implementation procedure by which all future AICUZ studies would be prepared in DNL, unless within the state of California who maintains use of CNEL. Based on the results of many studies, EPA and the rest of the federal government continue to use DNL as the best predictor of community reaction to aircraft noise.

3.6 If I can't hear DNL or CNEL, what noise levels am I hearing?

What you hear are individual sound events as they occur. These individual sounds events are not a part of the cumulative sound level calculated in DNL and CNEL. To calculate DNL and CNEL acoustical professionals use individual noise events, the number of events occurring during an average day, and the time of day that those events occur.

3.7 Why don't you take actual noise measurements rather than modeling the noise?

The Air Force models aircraft noise instead of actual noise monitoring for several reasons:

- In modeling the aircraft noise, we use a library of actual measurements of each type of aircraft flown through an array of microphones. The Air Force can then adjust this information to local environmental conditions.
- Modeling can include aircraft not normally based at a facility where monitoring cannot.
- In modeling we use an average annual day for noise. Modelling noise is just as accurate as measuring noise for a location because it is based off of measured aircraft, but modeling can be accomplished in less time which significantly lowers costs for the taxpayer
- Noise contours in the State of California are shown in Community Noise Equivalent Level, or CNEL. By using CNEL, we consider the loudness of aircraft, and the number and duration of events (total noise energy), and add a 10-decibel penalty for late night operations after 10:00 PM and before 7:00 AM and a 5-decibel penalty for evening operations between 7:00 PM and 10:00 PM. Noise modelling projects CNEL levels throughout the region, not just at the edge of the field. Connecting points of equal value create noise contours. The military and local communities use CNEL contours for land use planning, and because they are based on cumulative noise energy events for the day, they are different from the noise you hear, bringing in total noise energy and time of day.

3.8 What is a noise contour?

A noise contour is a line that connects points of equal value. Noise contours are similar to topographical contours on a map that show elevation.

3.9 What is a noise zone?

A noise zone is lies between two noise contour lines. DoD illustrates noise zones in 5 dBA DNL/CNEL increments. The lowest level shown is generally 60 dB CNEL or 65 dB DNL while the highest level shown is generally 85 dBA DNL/CNEL regardless of location. Typically, 85 dBA zones are on or near the runways and usually wholly contained on airport or installation property.

3.10 Why do noise events sound louder at night?

During nighttime hours, ambient (background) noise levels are generally low; therefore, noise events we may judge these events to be louder because the low ambient noise levels are used as a basis for comparison. In addition, more noise events may be audible at low ambient noise levels. In comparison, during the daytime hours, ambient noise levels are likely to be higher because normal activity masks some noise events. For example, consider a dripping water faucet. You may barely hear the drip during the daytime hours because other sounds in the environment, such as a television, are louder than the drip drowning out the sound. As other sounds are eliminated from the environment, (such as turning off the television), the overall ambient noise level is reduced and the drip becomes the dominant source of sound making it sound louder at night than it does during the day.

4. FLIGHT OPERATIONS

4.1 Why do airplanes have to fly later at night in the summer?

Night-time training is an essential skill that our aircrews must possess. Practicing at night is necessary for the realism that allows the aircrew to have confidence in their actions and aircraft during hours of darkness. Flying at night is another tactic that aircrews can use to avoid detection by the enemy and help ensure mission success. During the winter months, pilots can accomplish their training earlier because it gets dark earlier. During the summer months it becomes dark later in the evening shifting pilot training into the later hours.

4.2 Why are some aircraft lower than others when they arrive and depart?

Aircraft altitude is generally determined by distance from the landing or take-off runway. The closer the aircraft is to the runway, the lower the altitude. Depending on the airfield, arrivals normally descend at a fixed angle of between 2.5 and 3 degrees as they approach for landing. The angle of ascent on departures is a function of aircraft type, weight, air temperature, and wind speed. On occasion, other traffic from nearby airports may force military aircraft to hold down to lower altitudes to de-conflict air traffic.

4.3 Why do you need to fly low level (special activity airspace)?

For realistic training, the Air Force needs to train at low altitudes for various types of operations they perform such as Close Air Support and low-altitude tactical air navigation. Low-altitude training allows aircrews to practice maneuvers that are required to fight against enemy defenses and to successfully complete any combat mission.

4.4 Why does the number of aircraft operations vary from hour to hour during any given day?

There are many reasons why it might vary. Here are a few examples:

- Individual squadrons may be on different hours for training purposes (day only, day into night, night only). Where those windows overlap, the airfield might be busier (more operations) simply because there are more aircraft operating.
- Within a squadron, the flight schedule is often organized into “launches” of multiple aircraft. Those flights would train together, at the same time, before returning to the airfield for turnaround and maintenance. For example, launch of 6 aircraft for a 1.5-hour training mission away from the base, followed by 2 hours down time, followed by launch of 6 aircraft, etc. During the launches and recoveries, the airfield would be busier (more operations) than when they are off station (using Special Use Airspace or ranges) or parked for turnaround inspections and maintenance.
- Some training involves more airfield operations than other types of training. Depending on when these events are scheduled, there may be more intensive periods of airfield operations. For example, “familiarization” and “instrument” training aircraft would involve more flying time in the local areas for touch-and-go and instrument approach operations at the airfield than would air-to-ground sorties, which would likely have only one take-off and one landing per sortie. Depending on what time during the day that certain sorties were

scheduled (and there might be dozens of factors affecting that), there would be periods with greater or fewer airfield operations.

4.5 When departing the airfield, why can't airplanes reduce their engine power until they reach higher altitudes?

*A*ircraft need a high engine power to safely climb to higher altitudes. If aircraft fly at lower power levels, they would have to remain closer to the ground for a longer time, resulting in a greater amount of land being exposed to high noise levels.

4.6 What determines which runway is used at a military airfield?

The direction of the wind influence the runway used and the direction of arrivals and departures. Aircraft generally take-off and land into the wind. When the wind is calm, any runway can be used. Many installations designate a preferred runway for use during calm wind conditions, and will often accept a slight tail wind to minimize the noise exposure to local residents.

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5. AIRSPACE/NOISE OVER MY HOUSE

5.1 Why are planes flying in MY airspace right over my house?

Military aircraft conducting operations in conformance with the requirements Federal Aviation Regulation, Part 91 may safely fly over structures, such as houses, for any number of reasons in the normal course of flying. Flight paths over houses are frequently required for approaches and departures to established airfields.

Varying weather and operational conditions influence the flight patterns of aircraft near airfields. Wind has the greatest impact on flight paths as aircraft need to land and take-off into the wind. As the wind changes, the flight paths change accordingly. This can explain why commercial and some military airfields have multiple runways pointing in different directions. Depending on aircraft volume, air traffic control will put aircraft in holding patterns, increase aircraft spacing, or set aside noise abatement procedures in the interest of safety. This may also occur because of air traffic limitations within your local airspace, possibly relating to neighboring airports. In the airfield environment, aircraft typically fly on established approach and departure paths. These are established and published to enhance safety during flight.

5.2 Who has the ultimate control of the airspace above my house?

The Federal Aviation Administration has jurisdiction over all airspace in the United States and is the overall authority for airspace use, however in many instances the FAA has delegated their authority to the DoD. While landowners have a property interest in the airspace immediately above their property, this right no longer extends upwards indefinitely as was commonly understood before the birth of flight. Courts have determined that this interest is limited by the public domain called navigable airspace. The United States Congress has granted authority to regulate navigable airspace to the Federal Aviation Administration under the Federal Aviation Act of 1958 and related laws. Under this authority, the Federal Aviation Administration allows aircraft operations over private lands in navigable airspace provided the aircraft operate above the minimum safe altitudes prescribed by Federal Aviation Regulation, 40 Code of Federal Regulations Section 91.119.

Military aircraft conducting operations in conformance with the requirements of Federal Aviation Regulation, Part 91 may safely fly over structures, such as houses, for any number of reasons in the normal course of flying. Flight paths over houses are frequently required for approaches and departures to established airfields.

Aircraft are generally restricted to flight at altitudes of at least 500 feet (1,000 feet in urbanized areas) unless they are taking off or landing, or conducting military training activities in airspace designated by the Federal Aviation Administration for low-level flight. Once an aircraft departs from an airfield, the airfield's air traffic controllers no longer control the movements or actions of the aircraft. Pilots flying across country are handed over to regional Air Route Traffic Control Centers; pilots may also fly using visual flight rules or in special use airspace in which the responsibility is shifted to the pilots or a different Air Traffic Controller. Air Traffic Controllers are employees of the United States government or are employed by private companies who are contracted by the United States government.

5.3 Why can't the airplanes fly over some other neighborhood?

Airfields often have certain traffic patterns that aircraft must follow in order to avoid a collision with other aircraft, buildings, or other landmarks. Traffic patterns are dependent on which runways are in use and must line up with the runway.

5.4 Why are airplanes flying over my house this week when they haven't for months?

Weather or wind conditions, may require aircraft to use the most suitable runway to make safe landings. This occasionally causes the planes to shift traffic patterns and land on runways that are seldom used. Also, during runway repairs, aircraft must use other runways that may bring them over different neighborhoods.

5.5 Why do some aircraft rumble, whine, and make my house vibrate?

Some aircraft tend to make a rumbling sound because their engines produce a lower frequency noise. This lower frequency is what causes vibrations.

5.6 How can I decrease the noise in my house?

Keeping your windows closed provides 25 decibels of noise level reduction. People living near airfields can also reduce inside noise through sound insulation in the walls and ceilings, solid core doors, and triple paned windows, among other strategies. Contact a professional builder to determine what strategies are appropriate for your house.

5.7 Why can't planes descend at a steeper angle so they fly higher over my house?

Aircraft descending steeply from high altitudes places people on the ground and the pilots' life at risk. Approach angles create a safe descent angle for an aircraft and their passengers. Aircraft instrument approaches must follow a specific glide slope, typically 2.5 or 3 degrees, when approaching the airfield to land. Glide slopes are specific to the approach being flown and to the airport they are landing at. Glide slopes enable pilots to follow an imaginary line that extends out from the end of the runway and land in reduced visibility situations. The angle of a specific glide slope is determined by several factors, such as terrain, obstacle avoidance, the type approach being flown, and other safety factors. Aircraft not flying instrument approaches are still required to fly a specific glide path that is normally aircraft specific and usually tied to aircraft weight. This glide path, or angle of attack, is designed for safely operating the aircraft to avoid exceeding center of gravity tolerances.

5.8 I am nowhere near an airfield. Why are the airplanes flying so low over my house?

There are several reasons you may be experiencing low-flying aircraft even if you don't live in close proximity to the airfield. For example, aircraft may be lining up for landing at a runway eight to ten miles away. Weather conditions such as wind could require a change in flight paths. Also, some military aircraft may have a requirement to train at low levels. Normally the military conducts these operations on published low-level routes or in published special use airspace. These areas are well defined and have associated minimum and maximum altitudes for aircraft flight.

6. NOISE ISSUES/COMPLAINTS

6.1 Who can I talk to and what can I do to have my noise issues addressed?

You should contact the Public Affairs Office of the closest military installation either by telephone or website to identify issues with noise generated by military training and aircraft activity. They will want information regarding the time and place of the activity so that they can research the issue. The problem may have been an isolated incident and the staff should be able to tell you if that is the case after they check into the situation. However, not all problems have satisfactory conclusions this is because military aircraft must fly in order to train, move troop supplies, or provide fuel for other aircraft and this specific route is necessary for the defense mission.

6.2 What does *the Air Force do with my noise complaint?*

When the Air Force receives a noise complaint, it is logged and researched to determine the source of the noise. If the caller requests a call back, relevant information is gathered and relayed in a timely manner to the caller.

7. COMPENSATION

7.1 Will the Air Force compensate me when my home loses value because of noise?

No. The Air Force does not have blanket Congressional authority to compensate property owners for noise associated with military activity. There are many factors associated with reduced property values, including market conditions and other local economic activities If you believe your home has been damaged by aircraft flight activity, please contact the local installation Public Affairs Office for procedures in filing a damage claim for compensation.

7.2 Will the Air Force pay for damage to my home or livestock resulting from aircraft noise?

The Air Force has established procedures for claims against the government in cases of damage resulting from sonic booms or other Air Force activities. The Air Force investigates all claims submitted to determine the cause of the damage and claimants are compensated accordingly. The claims process begins by contacting the local Public Affairs Office who will contact their legal counterpart and provide you with information on filing a claim.