

Planning and Zoning of Private Airports

All airports are required to maintain clear approaches to their runways. The Minnesota Rules require that an airport not impose undue hazards on adjoining property or its occupants or endanger the user or use of existing surface transportation or power and communication transmission lines. Public Airports in the state of Minnesota are required to have zoning to protect the airspace surrounding the airport as a condition of funding. This zoning keeps neighboring property owners from erecting towers on their property that would negate the usefulness of the runways that have public dollars invested in them. All zoning is a local process.

Private airports without zoning have no protection against the development of neighboring properties. Since the airport owner's investment can be rendered useless by development on an adjoining property, we recommend talking with your local zoning administrator to see if they are willing to provide some protection for the airport. Other means of protecting the airport would be the outright purchase of adjoining property or the purchase of easements over the adjoining property.

The development of nearby wind turbines or other towers or the establishment of another airport in close proximity to a private airport may also cause airspace conflicts. Filing the Notice of Landing Area Proposal (FAA Form 7480) and returning the Form 5010 to the FAA when the airport is complete will get the airport listed in the federal airport database. Companies that build wind turbines and other towers generally consult this database to determine if there are airports in the area where they intend to build. The FAA uses this database to check for existing uses when considering other landing area proposals they have received. We require all airports to complete the federal process before we issue a license to the airport.

For more information contact Michael Hartell at michael.hartell@state.mn.us or 651-485-3698.