

J. An Excerpt from Sections 7 and 8 of Chapter 17 of FAA's *Environmental Desk Reference for Airport Actions*

7. DETERMINING IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE.

a. **Significant impact.** Use the information obtained during the analysis completed to meet other sections of this chapter and the thresholds in the following table to determine if an action would cause a significant effect. Local land use compatibility standards do not alter this threshold for NEPA purposes.

ORDER 1050.1E THRESHOLD	FACTORS TO CONSIDER
<p>- For most areas: When an action, compared to the no action alternative for the same timeframe, would cause noise sensitive areas located at or above DNL 65 dB to experience a noise increase of at least DNL 1.5 dB. An increase from DNL 63.5 dB to DNL 65 dB over a noise sensitive area is a significant impact.</p> <p>- For national parks, national wildlife refuges and historic sites, including traditional cultural properties where a quiet setting is a generally recognized feature: The DNL 65 dB level at which residential land uses are compatible does not adequately address noise impacts on visitors to these areas. As a result, relevant and/or supplemental noise analysis is appropriate in certain circumstances. Responsible FAA officials must be cognizant that Part 150 guidelines do not adequately address the effects of noise on visitors to areas within a historic site or national park or wildlife refuge protected under Section 4(f) of the DOT Act (see Chapter 7 of this Desk Reference for information on Section 4(f), recodified as 49 USC Section 303) and where non-aircraft noise is very low and a quiet setting is a generally recognized feature or attribute of the site's significance.</p>	<p>ARP reminds the responsible FAA official that for NEPA purposes, DNL 3 dB impacts over residential areas between the DNL 60 and 65 dB contours do not cause significant adverse noise impacts. However, the potential for mitigating noise in those areas should be weighed, including consideration of the same range of mitigation options available at DNL 65 dB and higher and eligibility for Federal funding.</p>

From: Table 7-1, FAA Order 5050.4B

b. **Mitigated Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).** If sufficient mitigation that would reduce all potentially significant noise impacts below threshold levels measures is included as part of a project and the sponsor has made binding commitments to carry out those measures within its authority, then an EIS is not necessary (absent significant impacts in other categories). In such cases, FAA may conclude the action by issuing a FONSI. The FONSI or FONSI/Record of Decision (ROD) must list the measures FAA has made a condition

of project approval, including those the sponsor will be required to carry out through grant assurances or other means.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT CONTENT.

a. General. A potentially significant noise impact often has corresponding impacts on land uses. FAA must prepare an EIS, if mitigation will not reduce impacts below the noise thresholds in section 7 of this chapter. Preparers should avoid repeating information presented in the EIS's Compatible Land Use chapter. As appropriate, preparers should refer the reader to either the EIS's Noise chapter or the Compatible Land Use chapter, depending on how the preparers have addressed noise and compatible land use issues.

b. Information needed when FAA determines a significant noise impact. The EIS should include information discussed in earlier sections of this chapter in the EIS. It should also include the following information as needed.

(1) Refined information. If the sponsor prepared an EA, revise the text and graphics as needed to meet EIS requirements. The EIS must thoroughly explain significant noise impacts. Sometimes, a more complete description of the noise events contributing to the DNL contours with added tables charts, aerial photographs, maps, or metrics is sufficient. In other cases, supplemental analyses may include using metrics other than DNL (see section 8.d of this chapter for supplemental analysis information).

(2) The DNL 60 dB contour. Where an airport development project has a potentially significant impact on noise sensitive areas (i.e., a DNL 1.5 dB or more noise increase within the DNL 65 dB noise contour), the EIS noise analysis must depict the DNL 60 dB contour as well. Further analysis is required in this circumstance to evaluate potential increases of DNL 3 dB and greater between DNL 65 and 60 dB and potential mitigation measures.

This information helps to further disclose potential project-related noise changes in the airport area.⁷ Additional contours are optional, as discussed in paragraph 1f, above. Provide figures showing noise sensitive land uses within the DNL 60 dB contour and the DNL exposure level for each of the following scenarios.

⁷ FAA has adopted the recommendation of FICON to examine DNL 3 dB or greater noise increases within the DNL 60-65 dB contour where a project has significant impacts. A DNL 3 dB increase in this contour causes a 3 percent increase in the percentage of people highly annoyed (FICON, 1992, Technical Report, Section 3, pg. 3-17).