

REPORT TO CONGRESS

OPERATIONS AT JOINT-USE AIRPORTS



**Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for
Acquisition and Sustainment**

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House Report 117-388, page 54, Report of the Committee on Appropriations, to accompany H.R. 8236, Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2023

The estimated cost of this report or study for the Department of Defense is approximately \$5,830 for the 2024 Fiscal Year. This includes \$420 in expenses and \$5,410 in DoD labor.

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SECTION A

House Report 117-388, page 54, to accompany H.R. 8236, Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2023, states:

“Operations at Joint-Use Airports

“The Committee is aware of the important relationship between the Department of Defense, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and civil airport sponsors in fostering joint civilian and military use of airports on land owned by the Department. The Committee notes that the FAA has spent over \$700,000,000 in Airport Improvement Funds on infrastructure projects to accommodate joint civilian operations at Department of Defense-owned airfields. The Committee directs the Secretary of Defense to conduct a study examining airports that have existing joint-use agreements, with an emphasis on large hub commercial service airports, to be completed within 90 days after the enactment of this Act. The Secretary shall provide the congressional defense committees with the results of this study not later than 180 days after the enactment of this Act. The study shall provide insights toward the creation of a pilot program that employs Department of Defense funds to build emergency operations facilities at joint-use airports to accommodate expanded military operations. “

SECTION B

Executive Summary

Following the Department's review of *Joint-Use Airports* (military airfields that are accessible by civil aviation) as well as large and medium hub commercial airports that have shared runway use with stationed military aircraft, we do not recommend the need for a "pilot program" that would employ DoD funds to build emergency operations facilities at joint-use airports for the following reasons:

Joint-Use Airports by the FAA definition are DoD owned airfields. The DoD has detailed standards for aircraft rescue and firefighting operations, equipment, facilities, and staffing; and has policies in place that require compliance to the standards by the Military Departments, and DoD funds the requirements. The DoD joint-use airfields accommodate less than one percent of all U.S. civil aviation. Therefore, emergency operation requirements are based on the stationed military aircraft and installation's air mission.

At commercial airports where the military share the airfield runway system through a use agreement, the FAA has specific criteria as detailed in the *Airport Certification Manual* for aircraft rescue and firefighting that must be complied with to obtain FAA operational certification (see 14 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §139.203). The FAA has a robust grant program dedicated to funding civilian airport infrastructure requirements to include aircraft rescue and firefighting facilities.

SECTION C

Scope of the Department's Study

The Department's study included a review of two circumstances: Joint-use airfields (those owned by the military that authorize civil aviation) and civilian commercial service airports where the military shares the runway system.

The Committee requested that the study put an emphasis on large hub commercial service airports where use agreements exist. The Department's study focused on large hub as well as medium hub commercial service civilian airports as defined in the *Airport Certification Status List* published by the FAA, in accordance with 14 CFR Part 139. This report does not include small hub and non-hub commercial airports.

Source: FAA Airport Data and Information Portal at:

https://www.faa.gov/airports/airport_safety/part139_cert/part_139_airport_certification_status_list

The Department's study also included "*Joint-Use Airports*" as defined by the FAA as an airport **owned** by DoD, at which both military and civilian aircraft make shared use of the airfield. List provided at Appendix A.

Source: https://www.faa.gov/airports/planning_capacity/joint_use_airports

For the study and this report, the term “*emergency operations facilities*” consists of fire stations, crash/fire rescue stations, or any other facilities that provide rapid response to flightline emergencies to include the vehicles, equipment, and extinguishing agents as described in 14 CFR §139.317.

The following is a summary of the study findings listed by Military Department.

Department of the Army

- **Civilian Airports:** The Army does not have any use agreements with a commercial civilian airport.
- **Military Airfields:** The Army has ten joint-use airfields that can authorize use by civilian aircraft as listed by the FAA as joint-use. All ten Army airfields currently have adequate emergency response capabilities for fire/crash/rescue.

Department of the Navy

- **Civilian Airports:** The Navy has a use agreement at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam which shares a runway with Daniel K. Inouye International Airport, O’ahu, HI.
- **Military Airfields:** The U.S. Marine Corps has one airfield at Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Yuma, AZ that can authorize use by civilian aircraft. MCAS Yuma has a combined structural and aircraft fire & rescue station and a military construction project is currently building new aircraft fire & rescue station, which is nearly complete.

Department of the Air Force

- **Civilian Airports:** The active Air Force has an airfield use agreement at Kirtland Air Force Base (AFB) with the City of Albuquerque, NM. A military construction project to replace a fire station is currently under construction and is nearly complete. The Air National Guard has use agreements at the twelve large or medium hub commercial civilian airports, listed below:
 - Bradley International Airport, CT: Owned by Connecticut Airport Authority.
 - Jacksonville International Airport, FL: Owned by Jacksonville Aviation Authority.
 - Boise Air Terminal/Gowen Field, ID: Owned by the City of Boise.
 - Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, MN: Owned by the Metropolitan Airports Commission.
 - Charlotte Douglas International Airport, NC: Owned by the City of Charlotte.
 - Reno Tahoe International Airport, NV: Owned by Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority.
 - Portland International Airport, OR: Owned by the Port of Portland.
 - Pittsburg International Airport, PA: Owned by the Allegheny County Airport Authority.
 - Luis Munoz Marin International Airport, Puerto Rico: Owned by Puerto Rico Ports Authority.

- Memphis International Airport, TN: Owned by Memphis-Shelby County Airport Authority.
- Salt Lake City International Airport, UT: Owned by the City of Salt Lake City.
- General Mitchell International Airport, WI: Owned by Milwaukee County.

The Air National Guard has identified requirements for the following emergency response facilities:

- Fire Station Addition at Bradley International Airport, CT.
 - Fire/Crash/Rescue Station at Jacksonville International Airport, FL.
 - Fire Station Addition at Charlotte Douglas International Airport, NC.
- Military Airfields: The active Air Force has ten joint-use airports (military airfields) that may authorize use by civilian aircraft as listed by the FAA as *joint-use* (see Appendix A). The following three AFB have an emergency facility project underway or in the planning stage.
 - Joint Base Charleston, SC: A fiscal year (FY) 2022 military construction project for a \$30 million airfield fire & rescue station is currently under construction.
 - Kirtland AFB, NM: A FY 2018 military construction project for a \$9.5 million fire station is under construction and a FY 2022 project for \$4.2 million to add an apparatus bay to an existing fire station are under construction.
 - Sheppard AFB, TX: A project to renovate the existing fire station is currently in the design stage.

SECTION D

DoD Standards and Policy on ARFF for Military Installations

DoD Instruction 6055.06, "*DoD Fire and Emergency Services (F&ES) Program*," requires DoD Components to plan, program, and budget for F&ES requirements and execute F&ES programs, and to develop and publish an annual F&ES risk assessment program to identify, manage, and correct potential fire threats and to assess the level of risk.

The DoDI provides specific requirements for *Service Delivery Objectives and Aggregate Response Time Standards* for responding to structural fires, hazardous material, ARFF, technical rescue, and wildfires. For ARFF, the first apparatus is required to be on scene in five minutes for unannounced incidents and one minute for announced incidents. The one-minute response is based on having a pre-positioned apparatus adjacent to the runway. The response time metric is 90 percent of all responses meet the standard during a one-year period.

DoD installations that do not meet the DoDI standards must take corrective action that could lead to manpower, training, apparatus, or facility requirements.

DoDI 6055.06 is on the Department's issuances web site at:
<https://www.esd.whs.mil/Directives/issuances/dodi/>

SECTION E

FAA Standards and Policy on ARFF at Civilian Commercial Airports

14 CFR Part 139 requires FAA to issue airport operating certificates. Airport operating certificates serve to ensure safety in air transportation. To obtain a certificate, an airport must agree to certain operational and safety standards and provide for such things as firefighting and rescue personnel, facilities, and equipment.

To ensure that civilian airports with airport operating certificates are meeting the requirements of Part 139, FAA Airport Certification Safety Inspectors conduct certification inspections. These inspections typically occur yearly, but FAA can also make unannounced inspections. Certification inspections include an aircraft rescue and firefighting inspection. FAA inspectors conduct a timed-response drill; review aircraft rescue and firefighting personnel training records, including annual live-fire drill and documentation of basic emergency medical care training; check equipment and protective clothing for operation, condition, and availability.

If FAA finds that an airport is not meeting its obligations, it often imposes an administrative action. It can also impose a financial penalty for each day the airport continues to violate a Part 139 requirement. In extreme cases, FAA might revoke the airport's certificate or limit the areas of an airport where air carriers can land or takeoff.

SECTION F

DoD and FAA Coordinated Efforts to Ensure ARFF Standards are Met

In 2012, the FAA and DoD agreed on procedures that FAA inspectors will use at airports where DoD provides all or some of the ARFF services. Although the military unit provides ARFF services, the civil airport operator is responsible for ensuring compliance with Part 139 ARFF requirements. To help the airport operator show the FAA it meets these Part 139 requirements, the DoD and FAA have developed a process to assure the civil airport operator that the military ARFF services meet or exceed DoD and National Fire Protection Association standards. To develop these procedures, the DoD provided the FAA with its ARFF standards, training, and inspection procedures for review. The FAA determined those standards and procedures are equivalent to the ARFF requirements in Part 139. Under the agreed-upon procedures, airport operators receive documentation from DoD ARFF providers every January.

Source: <https://www.faa.gov/sites/faa.gov/files/cert1205.pdf>

SECTION G

Fund Source to Build Emergency Operations Facilities at Joint-Use Airports

The DoD constructs ARFF or other airfield emergency facilities on military installations, to include those designated as a joint-use airport, with Military Construction appropriations. New facility requirements are developed as needed to comply with the afore mentioned DoDI standards. Existing facilities in need of maintenance, repair or renovation are funded with Operation and Maintenance appropriations.

SECTION H

Fund Source to Build Emergency Operations Facilities at Civilian Commercial Airports

The FAA Airport Improvement Program (AIP) provides grants to public agencies — and, in some cases, to private owners and entities — for the planning and development for more than 3,300 eligible public-use airports that are included in the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems. This program provides more than \$3.18 billion annually in entitlement and discretionary grant funds.

For large and medium primary hub airports, the grant covers 75 percent of eligible costs (or 80 percent for noise program implementation). For small primary, reliever, and general aviation airports, the grant covers a range of 90-95 percent of eligible costs.

Eligible projects include those improvements related to enhancing airport safety, capacity, security, and environmental concerns. In general, airport sponsors can get AIP funds for most airfield capital improvements or rehabilitation projects and for vehicles and equipment (such as airfield pavements, lighting and signage, terminals, hangars, control towers, aircraft rescue and firefighting buildings, fences, snowplows and firefighting equipment, area master planning, and much more).

The national Airports Capital Improvement Plan is an FAA document that serves as the planning tool for identifying and prioritizing critical airport development and associated capital needs for the National Airspace System. It also serves as the basis for the distribution of grant funds under the AIP.

Source: <https://www.faa.gov/airports/aip>

In addition to the AIP as a fund source, the Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) program allows the collection of PFC charges for every eligible passenger at commercial airports controlled by

public agencies. Airports use these charges to fund FAA-approved projects that enhance safety, security, or capacity; reduce noise; or increase air carrier competition.

Source: <https://www.faa.gov/airports/pfc>

SECTION I

U.S. GAO Report on Joint-Use Airports

AIRPORT CAPACITY: Civilian Use of Military Airfields Has Added Little to System Capacity, April 1991

Although this GAO report is quite dated, one of the chief findings is still relevant. The GAO reviewed civilian use of active military airfields and found that they provide only marginal airport capacity and little relief to congestion and delays at major metropolitan airports. This is primarily because most joint-use airfields are not located in major metropolitan areas where demand for air travel is high. As a result, the military joint-use airfields accommodate less than half of 1 percent of all civilian passengers and aircraft take-offs and landings. This situation is true today.

Source: <https://www.gao.gov/assets/rced-91-130.pdf>

SECTION J

Coordination with the FAA

This report was coordinated with the FAA Airports Safety Policy Branch, Office of Airports Safety and Standards, on April 23, 2024. Contact phone number (202) 267-9616.



Appendix A – Joint-Use Airports

“*Joint-Use Airports*” as defined by the FAA are airfields owned by the Department of Defense. The 21 military installations designated as joint use that allow civilian aircraft activity are:

Air Force

- AF Plant 42, Palmdale, CA
- Charleston AFB, Charleston, SC
- Dover AFB, Dover, DE
- Eglin AFB, Valparaiso, FL
- Grissom AFB, Peru, IN
- Kelly/Lackland AFB, San Antonio, TX
- March Air Reserve Base, Riverside, CA
- Scott AFB, Belleville, IL
- Sheppard AFB, Wichita Falls, TX
- Westover ARB, Chicopee, MA

Army

- Blackstone Army Airfield (AAF) (Fort Barfoot), VA
- Camp Guernsey AAF, Guernsey, WY
- Dillingham AAF, Waialua, HI
- Forney AAF (Fort Leonard Wood), MO
- Robert Gray AAF, Fort Cavazos, TX
- Grayling AAF, (Camp Grayling), MI
- Libby AAF (Ft. Huachuca), Sierra Vista, AZ
- Sherman AAF, (Fort Leavenworth), KS
- Sparta/Fort McCoy (Sparta), WI
- Wright AAF (Fort Stewart) Midcoast Regional, Ft Stewart/Hinesville, GA

Navy

- MCAS Yuma, Yuma, AZ

Source: [faa.gov/airports/planning_capacity/joint_use_airports](https://www.faa.gov/airports/planning_capacity/joint_use_airports).

Appendix B - Definitions

14 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 139 – Certification of Airports: requires FAA to issue airport operating certificates to airports that:

- Serve scheduled and unscheduled air carrier aircraft with more than 30 seats;
- Serve scheduled air carrier operations in aircraft with more than 9 seats but less than 31 seats; and
- The FAA Administrator requires to have a certificate.

Commercial Service Airport: means a public airport in a State that the Secretary determines has at least 2,500 passenger boardings each year and is receiving scheduled passenger aircraft service. Source: title 49, United States Code (U.S.C.) § 47102

Joint-Use Airport: means an airport owned by the Department of Defense, at which both military and civilian aircraft make shared use of the airfield. The FAA works with military departments when a civil airport sponsor wants to arrange civilian access to a military airfield, known as "joint-use".

Source: https://www.faa.gov/airports/planning_capacity/joint_use_airports

Large Hub Airport: means a commercial service airport that has at least 1.0 percent of the passenger boardings. Source: 49 U.S.C. § 47102

Medium Hub Airport: means a commercial service airport that has at least 0.25 percent but less than 1.0 percent of the passenger boardings. Source: 49 U.S.C. § 47102

Small Hub Airport: means a commercial service airport that has at least 0.05 percent but less than 0.25 percent of the passenger boardings. Source: 49 U.S.C. § 47102

Non-Hub Airport: means a commercial service airport that has less than 0.05 percent of the passenger boardings. Source: 49 U.S.C. § 47102

Appendix C – Acronyms

AFB – Air Force Base
AIP – Airport Improvement Program
ARFF – aircraft rescue and firefighting
CFR – Code of Federal Regulations
DoD – Department of Defense
DoDI – DoD Instruction
FAA – Federal Aviation Administration
F&ES – fire and emergency services
FY – fiscal year
GAO – General Accounting Office
H.R. – House Report
MCAS – Marine Corps Air Station
PFC – Passenger Facility Charge