



AVIATION DEPARTMENT - Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport
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Broward County Aviation Department: **Obstruction Approval**

Frequently Asked Questions

Broward County owns and operates two airports: Fort Lauderdale – Hollywood International Airport (FLL) and North Perry Airport (HWO). Consistent with Federal and State rules and regulations, there are additional requirements for developing property in the vicinity of the County-owned airports. There are Development Review Requirements intended to protect both people on the ground and in the air, by protecting airspace and regulating the development of land surrounding the airports. This document contains Frequently Asked Questions about some of the technical terminology and standards contained in the Development Review Requirements.

What are Airspace Imaginary Surfaces?

Airspace Imaginary Surfaces are the areas of airspace that, per Federal law, must be protected for air navigation. They are called “imaginary” because the airspace is invisible to the human eye. The airspace is protected by keeping it free of structures. Airspace Imaginary Surfaces are described as the elevation at which they start. They use a measurement type called AMSL, which stands for “Above Mean Sea Level”. Therefore, an Airspace Imaginary Surface at 50 feet means the protected airspace starts at an elevation of 50 feet. Property owners and developers need to take into consideration the Finished Floor Elevation of their structures as this is not reflected in the Airspace Imaginary Surfaces height.

As a general rule, the elevation of the airspace is dependent on the adjacency of a property to a runway. Typically, the further away from the airport runway, the higher the elevation of the airspace imaginary surface. For properties that are very close to the end of a runway, the Airspace Imaginary Surface may start at 30 feet AMSL. Whereas for properties that are located miles away from the airport, the Airspace Imaginary Surface may start at 200 feet AMSL.

How can I find out if my property is under FLL or HWO Airspace Imaginary Surface?

For both FLL and HWO, Broward County has adopted a map called an “Airspace Imaginary Surfaces Composite Map”. The map shows the elevations at which the Airspace Imaginary Surface begins. The map is intended for informational and conceptual planning purposes, and may change depending on conditions at the airport or FAA regulations.

Additionally, Broward County Aviation Department (BCAD) has an interactive version of the Airspace Imaginary Surfaces Composite Map available on its website. This interactive map allows users to find the Airspace Imaginary Surface for a specific property. A separate user’s guide for the interactive map is available on the BCAD Airspace website.

Can I build a structure that penetrates Airspace Imaginary Surfaces?

Airspace Imaginary Surfaces are protected by keeping it free of structures. By default, any structure (including a tall building, tower, pole, power equipment, etc...) that penetrates an Airspace Imaginary Surface is considered a hazard to air navigation and is not permitted. However, if both BCAD and the FAA determine the penetration will not be a hazard, it may be allowed and instead be considered an Obstruction. Property owners must apply for and receive approval from both BCAD and the FAA to build an Obstruction.

How can I find out if my project penetrates an Airspace Imaginary Surface?

There are private companies that will survey the Airspace Imaginary Surfaces near your property. However, in an effort to assist property owners to more quickly determine if their project penetrates an Airspace Imaginary Surface, Broward County offers two options for the public to determine (conceptually) if their proposed project penetrates an Airspace Imaginary Surface. The first option is an “Airspace Imaginary Surfaces Composite Map” available in PDF format. The map shows the Airspace Imaginary Surface height in “AMSL”. AMSL stand for “Above Mean Sea Level” and is the height above mean sea level that the Airspace Imaginary Surface height begins.

2. The second option is the interactive version of the Airspace Imaginary Surfaces Composite Map available on BCAD’s website. This interactive map allows users to find the Airspace Imaginary Surface for a specific property. A separate user’s guide for the interactive map is available on the BCAD Airspace website.

What is the difference between an Obstruction and a Hazard?

Both Obstructions and Hazards are structures (including a tall building, tower, pole, power equipment, etc...) that penetrate an Airspace Imaginary Surface. However, after review and approval by both BCAD and the FAA, an Obstruction is allowed to penetrate Airspace Imaginary Surface. If the structure is not approved by BCAD and/or the FAA, the structure is considered a Hazard and is not allowed to penetrate Airspace Imaginary Surface.

How can I obtain an approval to build an Obstruction?

Broward County has an application called an “Obstruction Approval”. The Obstruction Approval is required either as part of the County’s Site Plan process, or during the County’s Building Permit process.

What is an Obstruction Approval?

An Obstruction Approval is a specific approval required for any structure (including a tall building, tower, pole, power equipment, etc...) to penetrate an Airspace Imaginary Surface. Broward County Aviation Department (BCAD) is in charge of the Obstruction Approval program, including reviewing applications and providing recommendations for approval or denial. However BCAD cannot complete the Obstruction Approval process without the FAA’s Findings of Aeronautical Effect, which must be submitted to BCAD by the applicant.

What are the application requirements for an Obstruction Approval?

In order to apply for an Obstruction Approval, the following documents must be submitted to BCAD: Applications, Elevation Plan, Site Plan with GPS coordinates, and Airspace Data Sheet. The details about these requirements are listed in the Obstruction Approval application. While not necessary at the time of application submittal to BCAD, the Obstruction Approval review process

cannot be complete by BCAD until the applicant submits the FAA's Findings of Aeronautical Effect to BCAD.

How long does BCAD take to complete its review of my application?

Initially BCAD will undertake a preliminary review of the project information to determine if an Obstruction Approval is necessary. If an Obstruction Approval is not necessary, BCAD will notify both the applicant and the County's Environmental Planning and Growth Management Division staff. BCAD staff will make every effort to complete this preliminary review within one week.

If BCAD determines a project requires an Obstruction Approval, the length of time to review a project will be dependent on the following:

1. How quickly the application documents are submitted by the applicant to BCAD
2. The required review period by Florida Department of Transportation and
3. The submittal of the FAA's Findings of Aeronautical Effect by the applicant to BCAD.

At a minimum, the review period will be six weeks.

How do I file an obstruction evaluation with the FAA?

FAA obstruction evaluations can be submitted online at oeaaa.faa.gov.

The FAA has a FAQ page addressing many questions about its obstruction process.

It is available here: <https://oeaaa.faa.gov/oeaaa/external/searchAction.jsp?action=generalFAQs>

What is a "7460"?

"7460" refers to FAA Form 7460-1 "Notice of Proposed Construction or Alteration", which is the form used for obstruction evaluations. You can use the FAA obstruction evaluation website to file these forms electronically. Once you obtain the necessary FAA Findings of Aeronautical Effect, it is your responsibility to forward them to BCAD.

How long does the FAA take to complete its evaluation?

Due to the volume of evaluations that the FAA receives, **this process may take up to 120 days, so make sure to file early.** BCAD cannot complete the Obstruction Approval review process until FAA Findings of Aeronautical Effect are received and reviewed.

Is there anything BCAD can do to speed up the FAA process?

No. BCAD has no influence over a federal regulatory process.

Is there a fee for an Airspace Obstruction review?

There is no fee for BCAD's Airspace Obstruction application.

What standards does BCAD use to review an Airspace Obstruction?

The County's Code Sec. 5-182(n)(3)c.3.b) lists the criteria that BCAD uses to review an Airspace Obstruction application. These criteria are from Florida State Statutes Chapter 333. BCAD also considers comments from the FDOT and FAA.

Besides height, are there any other land development regulations for developing near an airport?

In addition to the structure's height, Broward County has Development Review Requirements addressing other potential land use conflicts for developing near an airport. These include noise,

lighting, smoke, glare, uses that attract birds or other wildlife, electrical interference, and other potential incompatible land uses. The regulations are found in the County's Code of Ordinances Sec. 5-182.10. Airports.