

New regional Categorical Exclusion (CATEX) policy published

To help improve customer service, the Great Lakes Region has published a standard regional policy on documentation of environmental categorical exclusions, in the form of a "Policy & Procedures Memorandum" (PPM). Airport sponsors and consultants are expected to use the new policy beginning in October 2007.

The PPM reflects FAA's obligation to consider potential environmental impacts and unique circumstances before approving a CATEX. The new policy is designed to clarify expectations, shorten the review process and enhance consistency.

What is a CATEX? A categorical exclusion is a determination by the FAA that a category of projects, which would otherwise require a complete environmental review, is "categorically excluded" from such review. In other words, because of the type or category of some projects, it is not generally necessary to conduct a full Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement.

We run a small general aviation airport. Isn't everything we do CATEXed? Airport size has no bearing on whether a project is eligible for a CATEX. Some projects (such as new runways) can never be CATEXed, no matter how small the airport, and impacts on any environmental resource category (e.g., air quality, wetlands, noise, endangered species, etc.).

If a project is categorically excluded, then is the environmental review complete? Even if a particular category of project is normally categorically excluded, circumstances unique to

the project or location could prevent the FAA from granting the CATEX in a particular case.

When is the right time to talk to the ADO?
 As early as possible in project formulation. The earlier you begin identifying potential environmental issues, the sooner we can help determine the appropriate level of environmental review.

Environmental Resource Area Review for Potential Effects and Impacts		Impact Anticipated?		Documentation Attached
		Yes	No	
	impacts to residential areas, schools, or hospitals?			
17.	Natural resources: Will action have significant impact on natural, ecological, cultural or scenic resources of national, state or local significance?			
18.	Noise levels: Will project have a significant impact (DNL 1.5 dB or greater) on noise levels over noise sensitive areas (residences, schools, churches, hospitals) within the 65 DNL noise contour? Check all appropriate boxes <input type="checkbox"/> Project will enable a significant increase in aircraft operations. <input type="checkbox"/> Project will enable a significant change in aircraft fleet mix. <input type="checkbox"/> Project will cause a change in airfield configuration and/or use: <input type="checkbox"/> Intermittent <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary (i.e., less than 180 days) <input type="checkbox"/> Long-term or permanent			
19.	Parks, public lands, refuges and recreational resources: Will project impact publicly owned land from a public park, recreation area, or wildlife or waterfowl refuge of national, state or local significance, or land of a historic site with national, state or local significance? (DOT Section 4(f) [49 U.S.C. 303 (c)] impacts)			
20.	Surface transportation: Will project cause a significant increase in			

Shouldn't we wait until the planning process is complete? It is vital that the planning process be completed before formal environmental review begins—but it is equally important to begin considering environmental factors during the planning process. It is also crucial to consider the environmental review process, as well as any other permits such as stream and wetland permits, before establishing project schedule expectations.

Document Links:

- [Processing and Documentation of Categorical Exclusions](#)
- [Appendix C \(Catex Long Form\)](#)