

New Airports Environmental Order (5050.4B)

The FAA published final Order 5050.4B (“National Environmental Policy Act [NEPA] Implementing Instructions for Airport Projects”), effective April 28, 2006, replacing 5050.4A.

Selected Highlights of What’s Changed

- Addresses NEPA documentation content and processing requirements rather than evaluation of impacts to individual resources.
- Adds several supplemental definitions of terms and concepts used in the NEPA process.
- Stipulates that NEPA applies to non-Federally funded projects included in an ALP approval conditioned upon future environmental review.
- Provides for “mixed” ALP approvals combining conditional and unconditional approvals at the same time.
- Expands guidance on state block grant programs (SBGP) and places greater emphasis on FAA’s SBGP oversight.
- Emphasizes importance of completing environmental processing in the year prior to requesting Airport Improvement Program (AIP) grant support.
- Emphasizes relationship between NEPA and airport planning, as well as the importance of public involvement and appropriate NEPA process streamlining.
- Emphasizes importance of completing airport planning before FAA begins an EIS, while giving due consideration to environmental issues during planning.
- Requires FAA to notify sponsors in writing when an action is categorically excluded.
- Provides for categorical exclusion of actions involving non-jurisdictional wetlands.
- Confirms that projects with minor wetlands involvement (as defined in the Order) may not require an environmental assessment (EA).
- Provides a supplemental list of airport projects normally requiring an EA.
- Defines “conceptual mitigation.”
- Confirms that noise mitigation contained in a NEPA FONSI or ROD qualifies for AIP funding without a Part 150 study.
- Emphasizes the value of environmental management systems in managing environmental commitments.
- Requires FAA to monitor mitigation.

How Does 5050.4B Relate to 1050.1E?

Order 1050.1E remains in full force and effect. It provides NEPA guidance to all FAA organizations, including Airports.

Order 5050.4B supplements Order 1050.1E with specific guidance for airport-related actions.

FAA’s Office of Airports will issue a “Desk Reference” to integrate compliance requirements for special purpose laws affecting FAA airport actions.

Where can I learn more?

The final FAA Order 5050.4B (including the Preamble) is available online at:

www.faa.gov/airports_airtraffic/airports/resources/publications/orders/environmental_5050_4/