

AIP HANDBOOK

Your Guide to Safety, Standards, and Infrastructure Development



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APPENDIX O – TOWERS

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19 **O-1. OVERVIEW**

20 The FAA Contract Tower (FCT) Program was established in 1982 to allow the FAA to contract out the
 21 operation of certain air traffic control towers. In 1998, Congress provided funding to permit cost-sharing
 22 for towers that did not qualify under the FCT Program because costs exceeded benefits. The
 23 Appropriations Act of 2003 included language making construction of an air traffic control tower, and its
 24 related equipment, AIP-eligible.

25 The [FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 \(P.L. 115-254\)](#) established eligibility for certified remote tower
 26 equipment that is operated as an FCT. A remote tower (RT) system, also known as a virtual tower,
 27 includes airport RT equipment on the airfield and at an RT center (RTC) located within a specified
 28 distance from the airfield equipment based upon specific installation instructions as provided by the
 29 FAA’s Air Traffic Organization (ATO) or the manufacturer. The RT monitors and controls aircraft operating
 30 on the airport surface and in proximate airspace. The controllers are located at an RTC, which may be on
 31 airport property or at a remote location.

32 The FCT Program is administered by the ATO. FCTs are staffed by private companies that are paid via an
 33 FAA contract, rather than staffed by FAA employees.

34 Tower projects are subject to statutory AIP funding limitations. For additional information on AIP
 35 funding limitations, visit the AIP Funding Categories webpage for details.

36 **O-2. GENERAL ELIGIBILITY AND JUSTIFICATION**

37 See: 49 U.S.C. §§ [47102\(3\)\(F\)](#), [47102\(3\)\(J\)](#), [47116\(d\)\(2\)](#), and [47124\(b\)](#)

38 See also: [FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 \(P.L. 115-254\)](#), Sections 133 and 161

39 For eligibility and justification requirements applicable to all projects funded with AIP, see [Chapter 2,](#)
 40 [Eligibility & Justification](#).

41 **O-2.1. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

42 **TABLE O-2.1. GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR TOWER PROJECTS**

Item	Description
Ownership & Operation	Equipment and facility must be owned by the airport sponsor. The equipment may be operated by a private company staffing the tower.
Airport	The airport has been selected for, or is participating in, the ATO’s FCT Program. ATO provides formal documentation stating that the airport was accepted as a candidate for the FCT Program and that the sponsor must provide a control tower meeting FCT program requirements. The sponsor must provide ATO’s documentation to the ARP Field Office if the sponsor requests AIP funding for the tower.
Equipment	All equipment must be approved by the ATO for use in the National Airspace System (NAS) or have FAA system design approval (SDA).

Item	Description
	Equipment for non-remote towers must be included on the ARP FCT minimum equipment list (MEL) or approved by ARP Headquarters.
Location	<p>Permanent structured control towers and airport remote tower components must be depicted on the latest FAA-approved ALP.</p> <p>The remote tower system must be located on sponsor-owned or leased property to be AIP eligible.</p>

43 **O-2.2. JUSTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

44 **TABLE O-2.2. GENERAL JUSTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR TOWER PROJECTS**

Item	Description
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The project must achieve at least one of the congressionally directed priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ accommodate capacity; ○ achieve compliance with standards; or ○ address safety determinations; and ▪ There is an actual need for the project and a timeframe for the need; ▪ Only the elements required to obtain the full benefit of the project are included in the scope; and ▪ The project must be necessary to support an airport’s participation in the FAA’s FCT Program.

45 **O-2.2.1. USEFUL LIFE**

46 [Chapter 2](#) discusses minimum useful life requirements applicable to all AIP-funded projects. One
 47 component of the minimum useful life requirement for a facility being reconstructed is that the facility
 48 must no longer be operational or maintainable, while rehabilitation must extend the useful life. [Chapter](#)
 49 [2, Section 2-3.2, Minimum Useful Life](#), provides details on what factors the ARP Field Office must
 50 evaluate if the facility has not achieved its minimum useful life.

51 [Table O-3.1.](#) includes specific minimum useful life requirements applicable to tower projects.

52 **O-3. ELIGIBLE TOWER PROJECTS**

53 For scope of work requirements applicable to all AIP-funded projects, see [Chapter 2](#).

54 Relevant Orders include, but are not limited to, the current version of:

- 55 ▪ [FAA Order 6480.4, Siting of Airport Traffic Control Towers \(ATCT\)](#), and
- 56 ▪ [FAA Order JO 7210.78, FAA Contract Tower \(FCT\) New Start and Replacement Tower Process](#).

57 See the [AC checklist](#) for a list of the latest version of ACs applicable to AIP-funded projects.

58 **TABLE O-3.1. ELIGIBLE TOWER PROJECTS**

Project Type	Justification and Useful Life	Additional Requirements and Considerations	Excluded Work
<p>Tower and Equipment</p> <p><i>Construct, Improve, & Reconstruct</i></p> <p>Unit of Measure: <i>Item Type</i></p>	<p>Needed to fulfill the sponsor’s obligation to deliver a suitable tower for participation in the FCT Program.</p> <p>Tower reconstruction is eligible after 40 years and the tower is no longer functional or maintainable.</p> <p>Equipment acquisition and installation may only be funded at the time of the initial tower construction.</p>	<p>A tower building, including utility lines to support water, electrical, and telecommunications, and a backup generator. Includes eligible interior areas, an elevator, restroom facilities, and furniture required for controller operations stations. Includes equipment from the ARP FCT MEL.</p> <p>The service road from the building to the airfield, the access road to the facility, and parking may also be included.</p> <p>Improvements may include replacing exterior building items such as roof, siding, windows, panes, and doors once they have reached the end of their useful lives and may also include expanding the tower for additional positions as required by the ATO, adding energy efficiency systems, accommodating Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements, and compliance with the Clean Air Act and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act.</p> <p>Reconstruction includes the relocation of existing equipment. Demolition is eligible when the existing tower will impede the new AIP-funded tower.</p>	<p>Routine work and rehabilitation.</p> <p>Facilities and equipment that exceed or do not meet ATO’s staffing and equipage requirements.</p> <p>Fixtures and furniture not required for controller operations stations, such as break-room tables, chairs, appliances, and sinks.</p>

59 Note: Remote towers will also be included in this appendix once additional implementation guidance for
 60 remote towers has been finalized.

61 **O-4. RELATED PROJECTS**

62 The projects in this section are not eligible for tower purposes; however, references to related projects
 63 that may be eligible are provided as applicable.

64 **TABLE O-4.1. RELATED PROJECTS**

Project Type	When Scope of Work Includes	See Appendix
Access Control Systems	Access control systems and panels for entry points (doors, gates) to secured areas	M, Security
Accessibility Measures	ADA-compliant accessibility measures	D, Environmental & Energy
Equipment	Airfield	C, Airfield Infrastructure
Tower Site Selection Study	Site selection for a tower included in a master plan and ALP in a stand-alone study	K, Planning

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