



April 1, 2020

AOPA Airport Support Network / COVID-19 and Airport Access Update #2

This memo updates the information we provided to our Airport Support Network Volunteers on March 24, 2020. Thank you to all who responded to the last update and for the increased level of communication with airports around the country. Our ASN Volunteers have done an exceptional job communicating the status of their airports to our Regional Managers and we encourage you to continue sharing updates from your airport as we navigate this public health crisis. We continue to receive reports of public use airports taking steps to combat the quickly evolving threat of the Coronavirus. Please consider this update as you communicate with airport leadership.

Airports and Airport Access

The FAA [policy memo](#) on March 16th reaffirmed that any closure of a federally funded and grant obligated public use airport is NOT authorized unless FAA approval is granted.

The FAA released additional [Information for Airport Sponsors](#) on March 28th which emphasized their primary concern that federally obligated airports remain safe and open to the traveling public and aircraft. Particularly during this public health emergency, airports play an essential role in transporting medical and emergency equipment and personnel. The FAA continues to expect all airports to operate safely and stay open. Items of interest for general aviation include:

- All proposed closing of airport access must be approved in advance by the FAA.
- Prohibiting certain flights (e.g., certain locations, types of aircraft, types of operations) may violate Federal law and the airport's grant assurances, unless approved by the FAA.
- All requests by airport sponsors requiring flights to land at certain airports for screening would ordinarily require prior FAA approval under Grant Assurances 19 and 22 and related statutes. The FAA has discretion to consider such requests and recognizes the exceptional situation presented by this public health emergency.
- From FAA's perspective, closing Restaurants, retail stores, or other non-aeronautical functions in a terminal is not likely to violate FAA grant assurances, particularly if driven by public health measures or reduced clientele, and especially if based upon restrictions applicable to all business entities within the jurisdiction.
- Airports have flexibility to defer the collection of rents and fees if circumstances warrant.

Coronavirus Relief Legislative Package for Airports

Funding for GA airports—which AOPA made a top advocacy priority for fighting the pandemic's impact—is part of a \$10 billion emergency appropriation for airports in the stimulus plan signed by the President on March 27, 2020. Of the more than 3,300 airports in the federal system, 2,815

airports that have no scheduled air service or have fewer than 2,500 passengers per year on scheduled routes will be eligible for the \$100 million in grant awards. The FAA is currently developing their guidance on distribution of these funds and the specific amount to be received by each airport is being calculated. This funding will come from the general fund, not the aviation trust fund, and would not be subject to grant assurances. It can only be used for a purpose directly related to the airport. This money may be used for any purpose for which airport revenue may lawfully be used. The federal share of each grant will be 100%, which means the airport sponsor will not have to pay any local matching funds to receive the money.

Financial Support for Small Businesses

As part of the COVID-19 economic stimulus bill signed by the President on March 27th, the Paycheck Protection Program authorizes up to \$349 billion in funds to pay up to 8 weeks of payroll costs, including benefits. Funds may also be used to pay interest on mortgages, rent, and utilities. These loans apply to small businesses with 500 or fewer employees – also including self-employed individuals, sole proprietorships, and independent contractors. Businesses with more than 500 employees are also eligible in certain industries. The Small Business Administration (SBA) has published [Small Business Guidance & Loan Resources](#). This information will be helpful to local flight schools, independent service providers, and other aviation businesses at your airport.

Security Access at Part 139 Airports

AOPA has learned that the TSA, on March 26, 2020, issued a Security Directive Alternative Measure to applicable airport operators addressing temporary relief from ID Badge renewal requirements. If an airport's badging/credentialing office closes to, or stops serving, current Security badge holders seeking renewal, the airport operator is temporarily relieved from the ID media renewal requirements. The TSA Guidance provides specific instruction for airport operators to comply with this temporary relief. Due to the sensitive nature of this TSA guidance, it is only available to airport operators and is not available to the general public.

COVID-19 NOTAM

On March 28, 2020, the FAA published a Special Notice that pilots need to be aware of potential COVID-19 related health and movement restrictions at their flight destinations, which may impact passengers and non-commercial crew members upon landing at those locations.

As always, AOPA recommends following all guidance provided by the CDC and state and local officials. Our public airport system is vital in times of crisis and disaster relief and is a critical component of our nations response to this challenge. Airports play a key role if medical services or supplies are required to be delivered via general aviation. We encourage ASN Volunteers to share this information with their airport managers/local officials. ASN Volunteers can stay up to date on the latest COVID-19 impacts to General Aviation at [this AOPA web page](#).

AOPAs advocacy team continues to monitor federal guidance and its impact on GA during this critical time. We value your role to promote, protect, and defend America's airports. Please keep your AOPA Regional Manager informed of developments at your airport during the COVID-19 crisis. AOPAs offices remain "virtually" open and ready to support you. Our Pilot Information Center is open 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Eastern, Monday through Friday at 1.800.872.2672.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Ginter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mike" and last name "Ginter" clearly distinguishable.

Mike Ginter
V.P. Airports and State Advocacy