



Fact Sheet on the Dangerous Effect Towers Pose to the Aerial Application Industry

Construction of towers in agricultural cropland throughout the U.S. is an area of concern to the aerial application industry. The number of cell phone, wind-energy and other towers erected throughout the U.S. in agricultural regions has increased significantly over the past several years and is projected to continue into the future. These vertical obstacles are a major safety concern to aerial applicators and significantly hamper agricultural production.

Towers are a safety concern to our nation's aerial applicators because they are constructed on or near agricultural land and are not properly marked with lights or other marking devices. Sadly, since 1995, 7.1% of all aerial application fatalities are the result of collisions with towers. These collisions are almost always fatal. Wind energy towers pose the greatest safety and accessibility concerns to agricultural aviators because of their projected rapid growth in the coming years and the manner in which many of these towers are often clustered closely together.

Without wise placement and proper marking of towers in agricultural areas, farmers may be at risk of losing important aerial application services performed on their cropland. Towers sited directly in the flight path of aerial applicators' landing strips and/or hampering the accessibility of treatable cropland could literally shutdown aerial applicators' businesses. This would detrimentally affect, in some instances, the only method farmers have available to them when the time comes to apply crop protection chemicals, fertilizers and seeds to foster crop growth. Aircraft help in treating wet fields when crop foliage is too heavy to allow ground rigs to enter. An aircraft can accomplish more in one hour than ground equipment can in one day. This means less fuel used, less air pollution and no soil compaction.

NAAA is concerned that as the number of communication, wind-energy and other towers are erected on agricultural acreage, as projected; farmers will enter into leasing agreements with tower construction companies without taking into account the safety and agricultural production issues of the aerial applicator. Erection of these towers should be away from the prime agricultural land.

NAAA has established the following safety guidelines that it requests be met before constructing towers so they will pose a reduced risk for aerial applicators:

NAAA Tower Safety Guidelines

- Petitions for constructing towers should be provided to the local government zoning authority, landowners and or farmers and aerial applicators within at least a one-half mile radius of a proposed tower, and the state or regional agricultural aviation association, no later than 30 days before tower construction permits are considered for approval. This information should include the proposed location of:
 - each turbine generator
 - each meteorological tower including the height to be associated with the wind farm

(See reverse side for more information)

- the distribution sub-station and any connecting power lines from the generators
- power lines connecting the sub-station to the existing electrical power grid.
- Towers should not be erected on prime agricultural land in a manner that may inhibit aerial applicators' access and ability to treat the land.
- If a proposed tower is to be constructed on prime agricultural land or in the vicinity of such land in such a way that may inhibit an aerial applicator's access, person(s) that own and/or farm such land should be made aware by the entity responsible for that tower that it may result in the land no longer being accessible to aerial applicators and in the event of a pest outbreak or plant disease a crop on such land may be put in jeopardy of not being treated.
- In the event that a proposed tower is constructed on prime agricultural land or in the vicinity of such land, towers should be freestanding without guy wires. Furthermore, towers should be lit and well marked so they are clearly visible to aerial applicators.
- Towers erected with guy wires, particularly the meteorological testing towers, should be marked with two visible warning spheres on each guy wire, and/or highly visible sleeves on the lower end of the cables that extend at least 8 feet above the height of the highest crop that may be grown there, and properly lit.
- In the event that a number of proposed towers are to be constructed on prime agricultural land or in the vicinity of such land, the towers should be constructed in a linear pattern, not a disordered, clustered pattern that would make an area completely inaccessible by air.
- During construction and upon completion, the operator of the wind farm should provide detailed field layout information to the local government zoning authority and make this information available to those working in close proximity to that area.

NAAA supported an amendment introduced by U.S. Representative Randy Neugebauer (R-TX) during the 110th Congress that was included in the House passed version of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2007 (H.R. 2881) requiring the FAA to conduct a study on the safe height and distance that wind turbines may be installed in relation to aviation sites. NAAA hopes to see the Neugebauer amendment adopted when Congress takes up FAA Reauthorization language again in the 111th Congress and to expand the study to include both aviation sites and operations.

NAAA represents over 1,400 members in 46 states. NAAA member operator/pilots are licensed as commercial applicator-operators that use aircraft to enhance food, fiber and bio-fuel production, protect forestry, and control health-threatening pests. Furthermore, through its affiliation with the National Agricultural Aviation Research & Education Fund (NAAREF), NAAA contributes to research and education programs aimed at enhancing the efficacy and safety of aerial application.

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