

## Frequently Asked Questions

Date: October 8, 2021  
To: Interested Parties  
From: San Diego County Regional Airport Authority  
Subject: Airport Obstruction Removal - FAQs

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The following provides responses to frequently asked questions regarding airport obstruction removal.

**Question #1** – What is an obstruction and how does the airport determine what constitutes an airport obstruction?

Response – An obstruction is an object that, upon evaluation, is determined by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to require removal or proper marking, lighting, and identification in aeronautical publications so that it may be easily recognized by pilots of aircraft navigating thru the airspace. The airport conducted an aeronautical survey in 2020 to identify all the obstructions surrounding San Diego International Airport (SDIA).

**Question #2** - Why is airport obstruction removal required?

Response – The safety of flight and welfare of the general public is contingent on preventing airspace hazards. Federal and State regulations require the Airport Authority to work to protect the navigable airspace surrounding SDIA (see FAA Grant Assurance #20 and California Public Utilities Code Section 21659(a) for further information).

Certain fixed objects, such as a building, may be mitigated by requiring marking and lighting, however, it is impractical to light vegetation, such as a tree, and the tree will continue to grow taller, thus making it an object requiring removal.

**Question #3** - How often are obstruction surveys completed by the airport?

Response – Obstruction surveys are done on a semi-regular basis, anywhere from 5-10 years apart. Prior to the 2020 survey, the last obstruction survey for SDIA was conducted in 2012.

**Question #4** - Is San Diego International Airport currently operating in an unsafe environment?

Response – No. The airport is operating with a full margin of safety. Newly identified obstructions are approaching that safety margin, which necessitates mitigating them, or if that does not occur, altering flight procedures.

**Question #5** - If the obstructions are mitigated will this mean that aircraft will fly at a lower altitude?

Response – No. Mitigating the obstructions allows the current procedures to be used as they are today with no changes of altitude or conditions of use.

**Question #6** - What are the implications if the obstructions are not mitigated?

Response – If obstructions are not mitigated, certain flight procedures for aircraft operating at SDIA could be restricted to daytime use only or be made unusable completely. In the long-term, this could require the FAA and airlines to redesign the airport's flight procedures, which could negatively affect the operations at SDIA.

**Question #7** - Does the Airport Authority need to remove the trees, can they be trimmed instead?

Response – Dependent upon the type of tree and how much of the tree needs to be mitigated, a tree will either be trimmed or it will be removed. If enough of the tree crown needs to be trimmed it may kill the tree, thus removal is the best practice.

**Question #8** - Does a new tree automatically get replanted?

Response – No. You may request a new street tree by visiting the City of San Diego's Urban Forestry webpage: [www.sandiego.gov/trees](http://www.sandiego.gov/trees) by clicking on the Free Tree SD feature.

**Question #9** – What type of trees will get replanted after these ones are removed?

Response – If it is a tree provided by the City of San Diego, trees that are approved as part of the City of San Diego Urban Forestry Plan will be planted, with preference given to native tree species over non-native tree species.