



# AIRPORT OPEN HOUSE GUIDE

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO HOLDING AN AIRPORT OPEN HOUSE









# Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	02
<b>PROGRAMMING &amp; ENTERTAINMENT</b> .....	08
<b>LOGISTICS</b> .....	12
<b>PROMOTIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS</b> .....	16
<b>SAMPLE LETTERS</b> .....	18
<b>EVENT PLANNING CHECKLIST OUTLINE</b> .....	22

The AOPA Airport Support Network program was introduced in 1997 to help members preserve general aviation airports throughout the United States. Today, AOPA works with over 2,000 Airport Support Network volunteers to promote, protect, and defend America's community airports.

This Airport Open House Guide is another in a series of publications AOPA has created to help volunteers keep their airport healthy, vibrant and growing.



**FIND US  
ONLINE**

[AOPA.ORG/ASN](https://www.aopa.org/asn)



**STOP BY  
AOPA HQ**

421 AVIATION WAY  
FREDERICK, MD 21701



**GIVE US  
A CALL**

800-USA-AOPA (872-2672)

# Introduction

For the public, flying is about commercial airlines and busy, chaotic commercial airports. It is about long lines, security checks, crowded airplanes. It can be a very stressful, fearful experience that only a rare few actually enjoy.

General aviation is a mystery, with many of its airports neither very visible nor very welcoming to the nonflying public, who is completely unaware of the exceptional freedom that we enjoy in GA. The concept of driving up to a hangar, walking out onto an airport or right up to an airplane without a TSA check or a ticket, much less jump in to the left seat of an airplane is far removed from their flying experience. They think that private airplanes are flown by an elite, exclusive crowd, or that they are dangerous because they're not big, commercial airplanes. Ask them if for driving directions to their local airport and chances are they don't know exactly where it is or if their community even has one.

How can we change that perception? How can we showcase general aviation, the training our pilots receive, the measures we take to ensure everyone's safety, and demonstrate how it benefits the community? How do we educate the public about the joy and adventure of general aviation? We create an event that is fun and inviting, while showing them who we are and what we do, and that general aviation is available and accessible to them too?

We host an open house.

## OPEN EYES WITH AN OPEN HOUSE

The most effective way to introduce the public to general aviation is to get pilots talking about the passion of flying. No one else is going to speak with more authority about what it means to fly than a general

aviation pilot. What happens when people are exposed to someone who speaks passionately about a subject? They get excited about the subject and want to know more. If we want the public to support and encourage general aviation we have to teach them and get them excited about it.

When you're curious, nothing beats seeing something for yourself, and that is the simple goal of having an open house at your airport—to give the public an opportunity to look for themselves, to see and enjoy the fascinating variety inherent to general aviation, to learn about how we support the local community, offer our unique services nationwide, how we do business, and the efforts we make to keep flying safe and accessible. But you have to create the opportunity and then invite them!

Tow out your finest single-engine family aircraft, an experimental design someone has built in their garage, an emergency medical service helicopter, a workaday charter twin, or a proud old warbird for them to see up close.

Offer them a chance to take an inexpensive ride in an airplane or helicopter. Show them an airport control tower, a pilot's flight-planning area, and an aircraft maintenance shop. Give them demonstrations of the expertise and equipment of local fire and rescue squads, educate them with informational and product exhibits, and entertain them with music, clowns, and activities.

Create positive experiences for the public, let them see the lengths we go to, to provide a safe environment for pilots and passengers alike, and they'll remember you when the developers come calling for your land. The slightest curiosity to visit your airport can spark the interest to get more involved with GA.

### PLAN EARLY

Hosting an open house requires a lot of planning and organization. It takes a solid, organized team of staff and volunteers, a complete list of what needs to be done and a timeline so everything gets done when it needs to be. Starting to plan a year in advance of the intended date is not too soon.

Why so much time? Several fundamental decisions must be made about the nature of the event that take time to secure, from potential exhibitors and owners to display aircraft to entertainment, food, permits and approvals, and most importantly, promoting the event to the public with plenty of time for them to plan to attend.

Organizing even a modest airport open house, with no fly-bys or airshow, is a Herculean task, especially for the first time. Experience is of immeasurable help, but if you've never been involved in such an endeavor, how do you even know where to begin? This will help you figure that out.

### WHAT'S YOUR VISION?

What kind of open house do you envision? Who will sponsor it? Who will organize it? How much will it cost? Here are some of the basic decisions that must be made very early in order for detailed, specific planning to begin.

Establish an objective. Why do you want to host an open house? Is it to attract and educate the general public about the use and value of the airport, to put a positive face on an airport that has suffered from negative publicity, to attract potential flight training customers, aircraft buyers, etc? Any of these objectives is excellent, but by making one of them the primary goal to establish a clear mission that will guide your planning efforts.

As the busiest general aviation airport in the world, Van Nuys Airport, situated in the center of a residential community north of Los Angeles, California holds an annual Aviation Expo to give back to the community most affected by airport operations.

Residents pay no admission fee to attend the two-day open house that feature a major airshow, static displays and exhibits, among other attractions. Corporate sponsors and municipal funding cover the cost of staging the event and its planners donate a portion of concession proceeds to area nonprofit agencies that provide volunteers to help staff the event. During the 1990s, the Van Nuys Expo generated more than a quarter-million dollars for area youth and service organizations.

Reid-Hillview Airport in metropolitan San Jose, California, has been under attack for years by hostile local elected officials, intent on closing the important general aviation reliever airport. Airport supporters generate local residential support for the airport with a "Your Airport, Your Community" open house theme. Cultural exhibits and demonstrations that highlight the largely ethnic community surrounding the airport are a big part of the day's festivities.

Articulate a mission or objective for your open house, and base your planning on that.

### TIPS

Issue special open-house invitations to people and organizations that are critical to the airport. Give them the VIP treatment, with guided tours, special seating, a meet n greet with key airport executives, and any other personal attention that makes sense at your airport. They may not come, but they may very well send members of their family in their place. The gesture will be remembered.

Bad weather happens and is a risk when planning an outdoor event and having a rain date can be difficult. Consider rain insurance to cover lost gate receipts or other income.

When selecting top managers and committee heads, strive for continuity. People who have had experience with a previous open house can help fast-forward the planning process.

In-kind donors are similar to sponsors in that they should receive the same opportunities to promote their business that cash sponsors do.

## TIPS

Put commitments and agreements in writing and distribute to all involved so there is no misplaced blame, backing out, or dispute if a disagreement arises later on.

Schedule a final briefing with staff the day before the open house begins, not the morning of the event. There will be too much going on.

## WHEN?

Every region has times of year that are better for hosting an all-day outdoor event, but summer is always an obvious choice because of warm temperatures and the likelihood of good weather. Kids are out of school and parents are looking for fun weekend outdoor activities. Here are some things to keep in mind when determining when you will host your open house.

Thanks to the growing popularity of airshows and fly-ins around the country, performers, static display aircraft, and exhibitors are in high demand, especially during the summer months.

Weather plays a huge role in the success of an open house. Will July be too warm for families to be outside all day where you airport is located? What is the average rainfall in April? Is fall a busy tourist and festival season for your region?

## WHO?

In many cases, the governing airport authority is the primary sponsor and organizer. Van Nuys airport has a relatively large professional staff, and the open house is planned and organized by them and supported by volunteers. Typically, a member of the staff functions as the hands-on chairperson, even though the formal title may be bestowed on a dignitary for political reasons.

At smaller airports, the open house may be sponsored, planned, and organized by a user group, pilot organization, or FBO.

A successful open house at Page Field in Ft. Myers means a healthy EAA chapter budget for the coming year because the chapter sponsors the open house—and reaps all the proceeds.

If the primary organizer of the open house is an airport user group, club, or organization,

“Thanks to the **growing popularity** of **airshows** and **fly-ins** around the country, performers, static display aircraft, and exhibitors are in **high demand**, especially during the summer months.

Before committing to a date, check with the local chamber of commerce, parks and recreation department, and other entities to see what other community events are already scheduled for your proposed date. If there is another event planned, can you use it to raise interest and leverage attendance at your open house? If you cannot, consider an alternate date.

it should seek co-sponsorship from the airport authority, owner, or other entities that sponsor the airport. Having that official seal of approval will pave the way for cooperation from airport staff, as well as possible in-kind man power, supplies and equipment, and perhaps even funding. Most airport managers and owners are advocates for the airport, so helping to sponsor and organize an open house is an excellent way



to show their support. Even if the airport has a small—or no—staff, the support of its operator will be critical.

It is imperative that all interested parties participate in the planning from the beginning. This includes the airport manager, the air traffic control tower manager (if applicable), a representative from the municipality or county, and FBOs, among others. Solicit airport businesses, flight schools, user groups, EAA chapters, and other interested parties also should be invited and encouraged to participate in planning the open house.

### HOW LONG?

There are pros and cons to hosting a two-day event vs. a one-day event. A two-day event allows good broadcast and print media coverage of the first day promote attendance for the second day. It gives the public an opportunity to attend more than one event of the many that are likely taking place the same weekend.

The EAA chapter that cosponsors and organizes the annual fall Aviation Days at Page Field in Ft. Myers, Florida, says that on the first day of the two-day airport open house, the chapter earns back the cost of staging the event. On the second day, it makes its profit, which goes toward supporting chapter activities.

The major problem with a weekend-long open house is getting commitment from all the areas of programming you intend to have including volunteer workers, and static display and fly-by participants. There are also added costs involved. But, once you have the people, equipment, services, and permits

and approvals necessary to have a one-day open house, it is relatively easy to extend the event to two days. Just be sure to weigh all the factors involved.

### WHO, WHAT, WHEN - NOW HOW?

Once you've decided what kind of open house to have, what the objectives are, when to have it, and who will sponsor and organize it, the detailed planning process can begin.

One way to ensure a successful airshow is to hire a consultant and/or event organizer to direct the planning. These professionals have the knowledge, experience, and contacts in the industry and can make life immeasurably simpler for airport open-house planners. Compensation for airshow producers is handled in various ways, ranging from a flat fee to a percentage of net income. Whether it's to identify a consultant or organizer, get information about performers, or just ask some basic questions about staging an airshow, your first point of contact should be International Council of Air Shows (ICAS), [www.airshows.aero](http://www.airshows.aero), which is headquartered in Leesburg, Virginia. ICAS lists members, event producers and consultants, and providers of airshow and event support services.

If hiring someone isn't in your budget, you will need to create committees around specific areas of responsibility. Appoint a head of each committee, and identify potential members. Set clear goals for each committee and each committee leader. Involve organizations such as the Civil Air Patrol. Members and cadets are great at directing vehicular traffic, helping to manage the crowds, and providing security on the ramp.

### TIPS

One way to virtually guarantee problems is to spring surprises on people with authority, such as the airport manager or air traffic control tower manager. At one open house, organizers had not discussed having fly-bys with the tower. When the tower chief learned at the last minute that a fly-by involving several high-performance aircraft was being planned, he reacted by prohibiting the crowdpleasing fly-by—even though no aerobatic maneuvers would be involved. Minimize the potential for problems by planning thoroughly for every possible contingency and involving every possible interest in the planning.

Structure your expenses and income so that you don't have to rely on paid admission to at least break even. That way, if inclement weather depresses attendance, the show won't automatically be a financial disaster.

**TIP**

Identify a core group of people who can make decisions on their feet, and appoint them as the Troubleshooting Team. Give each a visible uniform such as a brightly colored shirt with logo, and deploy them around the open-house area during the event. They are the people whom open-house workers should seek out for help in quickly solving the inevitable on-site problems. Equip each troubleshooter with a cellular telephone. Walkie-talkies operate on a common frequency, which can become congested.

**BUDGET**

How much will it cost to hold an airport open house, and what are the income sources? The answers to these two basic budget questions are as varied as the events themselves. Harriet Alexander Field in Salida, Colorado, held a one-day airport open house on an expense budget of just \$800. Admission was free, but the nonprofit organization that sponsored the open house earned income from ‘dime-a-pound’ aircraft rides donated by local pilots.

That contrasts with the million dollar-plus budget required to conduct a major two-day open house and airshow at a large metropolitan airport. In-between is an event the size of the Scottsdale Air Fair. The two-day open house features a range of civil, military, and warbird static displays and fly-bys, attracts about 25,000 people, and operates on a budget of about \$300,000.

**REVENUE**

Potential sources of income include ticket sales, parking fees, vendor and exhibitor fees or receipts, program sales and advertisements, and merchandise sales (t-shirts with the open-house logo are popular items). In many cases, income from the open house is supplemented by funding from the airport owner (city or county) and corporate sponsors.

**CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP**

An extremely important component of budgeting for a successful open house is securing cash and in-kind corporate sponsors. Without sponsorship, many open houses would never get off the ground.

An airport open house presents an opportunity for a sponsor to receive exposure before a large group of people from the community. The reasons sponsors

**MAJOR COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

What are the major tasks to focus on when planning an open house? Should you worry more about how many portable toilets to rent than the number of ads to appear in the open-house program? Here is a suggested list of major responsibilities that could be used to determine committee assignments:

<b>Permitting and approvals from:</b>	<b>Flight ops</b> (rides, fly-bys)
FAA (notams, waiver of airspace for airshow)	<b>Entertainment</b> (live music, kids activities, non-aviation related activities)
Airport authority	<b>Event publication</b> (format, editorial, advertising, printing, distribution)
City or town	<b>Promotion</b>
<b>Exhibitors and vendors</b> (including food permits)	<b>Insurance</b>
<b>Supplies and equipment</b>	<b>Car parking</b> (buses to and from open house if parking is remote)
<b>Signage</b>	<b>Incidentals</b> (water, sunscreen, shaded seating area for resting)
<b>Corporate Sponsors and In-kind Donations</b>	<b>Cleanup</b>
<b>Static display</b>	
<b>Fly-in aircraft</b> (parking and transport of people to and from display area)	



will participate will vary from goodwill in the community to increased sales. Before making a proposal to a potential corporate sponsor, try to determine what their goals might be. It will help sell your proposal.

For example, a national soft drink manufacturer that sponsors hundreds of community gatherings across the country may not be persuaded to support your event based on your optimistic projections of how much product they will sell from soft drink stands at the open house.

Instead, the manufacturer is looking for a much bigger boost in sales of its product at area grocery stores. To win over that sponsor, you could propose to promote advance ticket sales at a reduced price, courtesy of the sponsor. The tickets must be bought at area grocery stores. The promotion steers people to the stores, where they are likely to buy the soft drink.

In return for their sponsorship, they will want visibility at the open house including banners, company names and logos on the official program or event t-shirt, advertisements in the program, mentions by the announcer throughout the event, invitations to a VIP party with display aircraft pilots and performers, and a tent assigned to the sponsor and its guests. They may have suggestions you haven't thought of – be open to them and accommodate them if you can.

Put a trusted lieutenant in charge of sponsor relations at the open house. That person should ensure the sponsor's accommodations—tent, chairs, refreshments, and anything else called for in the sponsorship agreement—are ready at the start of the event and supported throughout. You want your sponsors to be happy and eager to participate next year.

### IN-KIND DONATIONS

In-kind donations are a great way to mitigate out-of-pocket expenses for an open house, and can come from a variety of sources. Donations represent a dollar value, but are supplied in lieu of a cash contribution like a corporate sponsorship.

Airport management and FBOs can provide fuel for static display aircraft, line personnel for directing and parking aircraft, police, fire, and rescue support, important crowd control equipment such as barricades and cones, and even portable toilets. Pilots and aircraft owners who are active in the area business community are also a great source of in-kind contributions, ranging from tents to printing services for programs and flyers.

Other in-kind donations include discounts on overnight accommodations, loaner vehicles (cars and vans) to performers and owners of display aircraft while they are in town, golf carts for event staff, tents for exhibitors, public address equipment, and any other equipment or services necessary for staging the open house.

### TIPS

Don't make assumptions about who might be willing to sponsor an airport open house. Be creative in identifying opportunities. For example, one open house organizer signed up an area utility company as a sponsor. The utility was facing potential deregulation and needed to generate goodwill among its customers and, ultimately, support for its position on deregulation. Sponsorship "bought" the utility a large, captive, and demographically qualified audience at the open house. The utility got to polish its image and, through handouts and an exhibit, conduct a low-key informational campaign on the deregulation issue.

The adage "you have to spend money to make money" applies to airport open houses. It may take cash deposits to secure equipment, service, and display aircraft commitments, for example, so start the planning process with some working capital in hand.

# Programming & Entertainment

“Lots of factors go into the air-show or-no decision, and you owe it to planners, sponsors, and the community to research all of the factors that apply to your specific situation.

## STATIC DISPLAY

A static display of aircraft is the heart of an airport open house. Strive for a wide variety of display aircraft— hot air balloons, warbirds, ultralights, experimentals, antiques and classics, seaplanes and amphibians. If your airport can accommodate them, bring in turboprops and business jets (encourage flight training and maintenance school and new-aircraft sales displays). Invite aircraft that will highlight general aviation’s value to the community— medevac and law enforcement aircraft; crop-dusters and firefighting aircraft (if applicable); and AirLifeLine or other volunteer airlift corps. If your event is being held at a large airport, don’t overlook the potential for big aircraft such as a FedEx Boeing 727; helicopters; and military aircraft. They may not all fit the definition of general aviation, but they will appeal to your visitors.

The typical compensation for participating in an open house static display is a full tank of fuel on departure. Military participants usually specify that they be able to purchase fuel at their military contract rate. If it’s a two-day event, visiting crews are provided with hotel rooms and meals, and, in some cases, vehicles. Upon arrival, all static display participants should be given a welcome package containing show instructions and schedule, a map of the area, a thank-you gift, and an invitation to the sponsor’s party.

The Commemorative Air Force (CAF), headquartered in Dallas, Texas (Phone: 877.767.7175; website: [www.commemorativeairforce.org](http://www.commemorativeairforce.org)) is a great

resource for warbirds. With more than 80 CAF squadrons around the country, the headquarters staff can advise you where to find a specific type of warbird or the nearest CAF unit.

Another resource is area aviation museums, many of which have restored, flying aircraft available for static display. Local EAA chapters can direct open-house planners to interesting experimental aircraft in the area. Regional aviation publications are also valuable resources for prospecting display aircraft. Plan early - six months in advance of the event is not too soon to publish a notice soliciting owners of interesting and unusual aircraft to participate in your event.

Military aircraft are popular static display attractions, but tight budgets have had an effect on the services’ flexibility to dispatch aircraft and crews to community open houses. Contact the following to inquire about military aircraft participation at an open house.

Make sure the static display includes some hands-on aircraft—avoid the appearance of a solid line of cordoned-off aircraft. At Van Nuys, an area aviation maintenance school donated a real, but nonflying, homebuilt aircraft modified to be “kid friendly.” Major parts on the aircraft, dubbed “Vinnie,” are labeled and their functions explained, and kids are encouraged to touch the airplane and climb into the cockpit. Each display aircraft should be staffed throughout the day to answer questions and provide security. Ask participants to bring informational signs or provide text that can be used to make signs.



## AIRCRAFT RIDES

Getting up in the air is what general aviation is all about, and for many non-pilots, a ride in an airplane or helicopter is the ultimate lure that attracts them to an airport open house.

Commercial helicopter and biplane sightseeing operators are popular attractions at open houses. Coordinate with the air traffic control tower (if applicable) on where to stage the aircraft for passenger loading and unloading and designating a flight path.

Penny-a-pound (nickel- or dime-a-pound in today's dollars) airplane rides are a cherished tradition and still a centerpiece of the small-town airport open house.

Generally, it's easy to find local pilots willing to donate their time and aircraft to conduct the flights.

Typically, pilot volunteers are provided with fuel, or at least given a discount on the price. However, at press time, a thorny legal issue involving this kind of charity flying still had not been resolved.

An FAA policy statement issued in 1999 requires pilots to enroll in an FAA-

approved random drug testing program prior to engaging in charitable passenger carrying flight operations, such as might be conducted at an airport open house. Unfortunately, to meet the FAA's drug testing requirements, a pilot will have to spend in excess of \$200 and considerable paperwork to engage in an FAA-approved drug-testing program.

On March 30, 1999, AOPA President Phil Boyer sent a letter to FAA Administrator Jane Garvey urging the FAA to reconsider the new policy and once again permit pilots to engage in charitable sightseeing flight operations without enrolling in an FAA-approved random drug testing program.

As of early June 1999, the FAA has issued approximately 20 exemptions for charity and "community event" sightseeing flights.

FAA responded with an amended exemption process that grants the "Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, on behalf of its members," an exemption from specific FARs "to the extent necessary to allow AOPA member-pilots to conduct local sightseeing flights at charity or community events, for compensation or hire, without complying with certain anti-drug and alcohol misuse

## TIP

When parking static display aircraft, avoid segregating by type. Alternate warbirds with experimentals, ultralights, and other dissimilar types to ensure that the crowds will be exposed to the full range of aircraft.



**TIP:**

The only safe way to avert potential problems involving the drug testing issue is to scrupulously avoid providing any sort of compensation, including fuel discounts and donations, to pilots who fly “paying” passengers at an open house. If passengers do not pay for the flight in any manner, and the pilots receive no in-kind compensation, the drug-testing requirement does not apply. That is the case with Young Eagles flights, which are free to kids taking their first general aviation airplane ride.

prevention requirements of Part 135,” subject to certain limitations. There are 10 limitations including a requirement that charity flights be conducted in day VFR within 25 miles of the airport, pilots must have at least a Private pilot certificate, be familiar with regulations concerning drug-free operations, and make a logbook entry for each event in which the pilot participates.

For complete details, call AOPA’s Pilot Hotline at 800-USA-AOPA or login to <https://www.aopa.org/advocacy/advocacy-briefs/guide-to-charitable-nonprofit-community-event-sightseeing-flights>

**SO YOU’RE CONSIDERING AN AIRSHOW?**

Two things are certain if you hold an airshow in conjunction with an airport open house: You’ll attract a much bigger crowd with an afternoon of precision aerobatics and high-performance aircraft demonstrations and the complexity and cost of your open house will rise exponentially. The International Council of Air Shows (ICAS) states that except for professional baseball, airshows draw more spectators in this country than any other attraction. That impressive record attests to the public’s unflagging enthusiasm for flying machines.

But safety issues, cost, and crowds add many layers of complexity and challenge to the planning process.

Will an airshow contribute to achieving the objectives set by organizers? If the primary objective of the open house is to raise funds for a cause or organization, a well-managed airshow can certainly go a long way toward achieving that goal because of the crowds it will generate. However, if the primary objective is to educate the community about the transportation, economic, public safety, and lifestyle benefits of having a vibrant local general aviation airport, an airshow may actually be a distraction.

The noise, commotion, and crowds associated with an airshow can make it difficult to present and manage the kind of demonstrations, exhibits, and static displays that focus on general aviation activities, community organizations and services. On the other hand, the absence of an airshow means lower attendance numbers at an open house. Some organizers believe it is lower attendance is more productive because people have a better opportunity to learn about and enjoy the airport itself.





Cost is also another consideration, which can range from \$10,000 for a modest one-day show to \$250,000 or more for two days featuring national, professional performers, corporate sponsorship of an airshow is an absolute must. An event could easily end the weekend having lost money.

Aerobatic performances trigger the involvement of the FAA in approving and planning the event. Contact your local FAA flight standards district office (FSDO) at least 60 days in advance of the open house to discuss airshow issues, but preferably at the beginning of the planning process.

Formal application for a waiver of airspace must be made at least 45 days in advance of the event. (See sidebar.) Managing the airshow site calls for an “air boss,” an experienced and knowledgeable organizer and manager who controls all aircraft movements on the ground and in the air during an airshow.

### AIR SHOW ALTERNATIVES

Fly-bys are a great, cost effective alternative to aerobatic airshows. The annual Scottsdale, Arizona, Air Fair features a full day of non-aerobatic fly-bys ranging from high-speed passes by a P-51 Mustang and slower (but no less exciting) tours of the pattern by a restored B-17, to a U.S. Air Force B-2 bomber fly-over. No FAA waivers are required because the aircraft are not executing aerobatic maneuvers.

The constant flying at Scottsdale calls for close coordination with the air traffic control tower, and cooperation from airport FBOs catering to business aircraft operators who may be inconvenienced. The payoff is in attendance. The two-day Air Fair averages 25,000 in attendance and organizers are convinced that fly-bys are a big reason for it.

Another option may be a parachute jump. A parachute jump may not require an FAA waiver if the landing zone is in the middle of the airport, away from people. FSDO managers can provide guidance on this option.

Bottom line: Lots of factors go into the air-show or-no decision, and you owe it to planners, sponsors, and the community to research all of the factors that apply to your specific situation.

### OTHER ACTIVITIES

Not every activity or exhibit at the open house has to be directly related to aviation. People come to an open house expecting an enjoyable family day out of doors. Kids have boundless energy, restless curiosity, and short attention spans. Give visitors an interesting and informative variety of things to see and do. Here are some suggestions that have proven popular at airport open houses:

- **Public safety demonstrations (fire, police, and rescue)**
- **Live music**
- **A “kids zone” with clowns, face painting, hands-on activities, rides, and amusements**
- **Motorcycle and car shows (antiques, classics, hot rods, customs, etc.)**
- **Post office first-edition aviation stamp cancellations**
- **Tethered hot air balloon rides**
- **Radio-controlled model demonstrations**
- **Historical exhibits**
- **A pavilion with civic, military service, and business exhibits**

# Logistics

“The temporary tower facility could be an existing building on the airport, a mobile tower cab (each FAA region has at least one), or even a flatbed truck.

## FLIGHT OPERATIONS

If the airport has an air traffic control tower, the tower chief will be responsible for the safety of all aircraft operations including arrivals, departures, and ground movements. This calls for extensive preshow planning and coordination during the event between the tower, airport authorities, and open-house managers.

If there is no control tower on the field, a responsible and experienced person should be given “air boss” authority to oversee aircraft movements.

If a large volume of non-based aircraft is expected to fly to the open house, or if extensive fly-bys are planned, that will affect normal aircraft operations, have the airport manager file a notam with the controlling FAA flight service station, announcing the open house.

## TEMPORARY TOWER

It is possible to put a temporary ATC tower in operation at a non-towered airport. There are no specific rules to determine when a temporary tower is justified. Factors that might warrant consideration of a temporary control tower are expected heavy volume of arrivals and departures, runway layout, configuration of area airspace (for example, the existence of restricted or prohibited areas that could pose a problem for transient traffic), and the effect of the open house on traffic and other airports in the area.

A request for a temporary tower and controller staffing should be made to the controlling FAA regional office. The request should not declare that a dangerous situation

could arise without a control tower. Rather, it should emphasize that a temporary tower would be in the best interest of safety, expedite the flow of aircraft to and from the airport, and minimize delays to surrounding traffic in affected airspace.

If the request is approved, the FAA may ask for reimbursement for the cost of setting up the tower and related equipment and for expenses of sending controllers to the event. (The controllers themselves do not receive additional compensation.) Lobby for controllers who are experienced at working high density general aviation traffic.

The temporary tower facility could be an existing building on the airport, a mobile tower cab (each FAA region has at least one), or even a flatbed truck. The military also may agree to provide a mobile cab. It's important to get started on a temporary tower effort early. The mobile cabs are in short supply and must be scheduled many months in advance. Also, it's vital that open-house organizers meet with controllers on site well in advance so that procedures can be worked out.

## CONCESSIONS AND VENDORS

Food and drink concessions are necessary and desirable at an open house. Good quality and sanitary conditions are the basic requirements. An excellent way to win support in the community is to invite area nonprofit organizations such as the Rotary Club, Lions Club, church groups, or Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts, to set up concession stands at the open house. One caveat, however: Insist on experience. Don't risk your event on first-time nonprofit food concessionaires.



Local regulations may require that all vendors have an appropriate permit or license (one-day or event permits may be available) and that food vendors show evidence of having completed food safety training.

Local custom will dictate whether a nonprofit concessionaire should pay open-house organizers a flat fee, a percentage of gross or net revenue, or nothing at all for the opportunity to work the event. Commercial concessionaires and exhibitors, on the other hand, expect to pay to set up shop at an airport open house.

The simplest way to charge a vendor or commercial exhibitor is a flat fee. At one open house, each food vendor and exhibitor pays a \$100 fee for the two days. Another open house charges just \$20 if the vendor does not require electrical power and \$30 with power.

At Reid-Hillview Airport's annual open house, the airport association hosts a pancake breakfast—but it's not limited to pilots flying in. Anyone can come, and members of the local community come out early to meet local pilots and learn more about the airport.

In Watsonville, California, an annual fly-in achieves some of the same community support benefits as an open house—the local Lions Club, Rotary Club, Chamber of

Commerce, and other community service groups handle the food concessions.

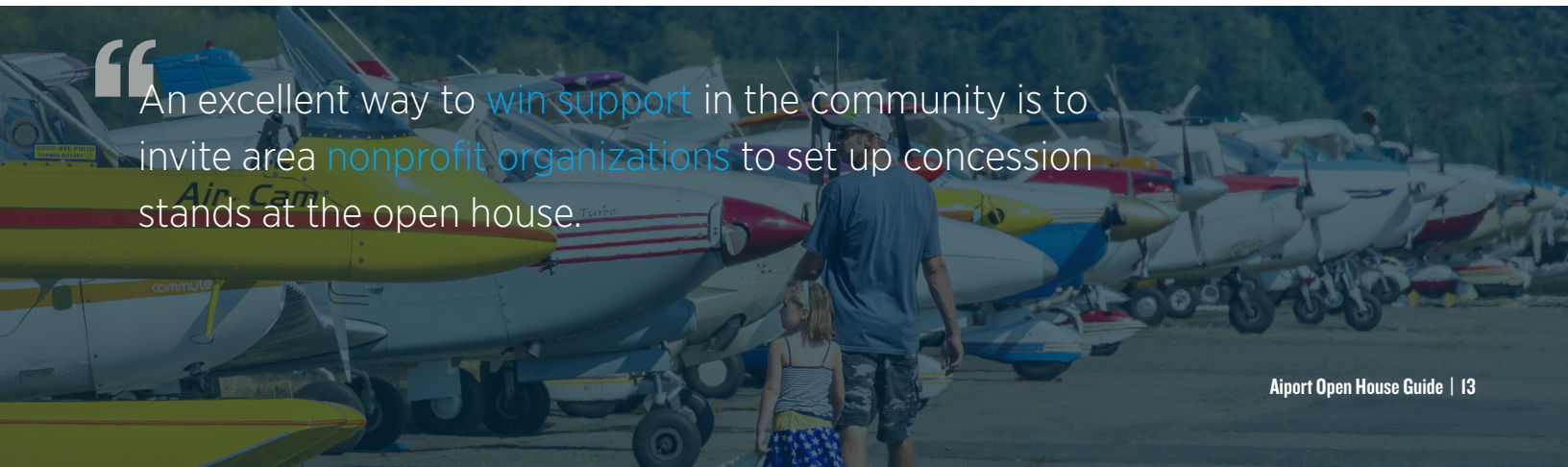
Vendors are interested in the size of the crowd, of course. Don't overpromise before the event or you'll quickly gain that reputation among area vendors. Also, don't overload the open house with too many vendors and exhibitors, or no one will be successful.

## INSURANCE

Typically, the open house sponsor is required by the airport owner to have liability insurance for the event, with the airport owner named on the policy as an additional insured. Commercial vendors working the open house also should provide evidence of liability insurance.

Like most other considerations, the amount of liability insurance coverage needed depends on the size and scope of the open house and the specific requirements imposed by the airport owner. The good news is that event liability insurance premiums are relatively inexpensive.

Typical limits range from \$500,000 to about \$2 million, with \$1 million a common amount. A local EAA chapter that sponsors an airport open house can obtain liability insurance through the national EAA. Event insurers are listed on the ICAS Web site.



“An excellent way to win support in the community is to invite area nonprofit organizations to set up concession stands at the open house.”

### AIRSHOW ADVISORY CIRCULAR

An airport open house with an airshow involving aerobatic maneuvers requires the involvement of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). FAA Advisory Circular 91-45C, “Waivers—Aviation Events” provides guidance on what types of events and shows require FAA approval and involvement. In general, if the show includes aerobatic acts, airshow organizers must apply for a waiver from standard Federal Aviation Regulations operating rules regarding altitudes, airspeeds, and airspace. The AC provides guidance on completing FAA Form 7711-2, “Application for Waiver or Authorization.”

**Following is a brief excerpt from the introductory section of AC 91-45C.**

#### BACKGROUND

Numerous waivers are issued each year by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for the purpose of aviation events or aerial demonstrations. These waivers are issued based on the FAA policy that anytime the agency determines a proposed event will be in the public interest in terms of safety and environmental concerns, a waiver will be issued predicated on specific requirements of the event. Regardless of the purposes for which an aviation event is sponsored, events or show sites judged unsafe shall not be accepted for waiver or authorization consideration. Based on the foregoing, this AC is intended to explain many of the requirements necessary when considering the show site, facilities, the level of competence of participants, waivers and/or authorizations required, and other items of concern to the prospective aviation event sponsor.

### DEFINITIONS

Many terms used in this AC are unique to aerial demonstration/aviation events; therefore, the following definitions shall enhance the understanding of their application:

**A**

**Aerobatic Flight.** The FAA has determined that for purposes of an aviation event, an aerobatic maneuver means an intentional maneuver in which the aircraft is in sustained inverted flight or is rolled from upright to inverted or from inverted to upright position. All standard aviation event aerobatic maneuvers such as slow rolls, snap rolls, loops, Immelmans, Cuban eights, spins, hammerhead turns, etc., may not be performed over congested areas or over spectators. Steep banked, level, climbing, or descending turns necessary during maneuvering between aerobatics are not considered to be aviation event aerobatic maneuvers. Normal positioning turns for high performance aircraft operated by the military regardless of angle or bank or pitch attitude, are not considered to be aviation event aerobatic maneuvers. Normal maneuvers, such as steep turns, involved in air racing are not considered aerobatic.

**B**

**Aviation Events** include airshows, air races, aerobatic contests, parachute demonstration jumps, practice areas designated for aerobatic proficiency or training, and balloon meets and races. Most events are held at or immediately adjacent to an airport. An increasing number, however, are held offshore (within gliding distance of land), over water, in the vicinity of a state fairground, or at other off airport locations. Aerobatic school activities or aerobatic meets may occur which are not aviation events, contests, or races, even though a waiver must be issued. At these school activities or meets that are not advertised as aviation events, it may not be necessary to provide public aviation event policing and emergency facilities.

**C**

**Certificate of Waiver or Authorization.** FAA Form 7711-1, Certificate of Waiver or Authorization, is issued after proper application and approval, for the purpose of providing TEMPORARY RELIEF from certain designated Federal Aviation Regulations.







# Promotions and Public Relations

“ Along with advertising and promotion, seek prior editorial coverage of the event. Press releases are a staple of media prospecting, and AOPA offers excellent guidance on how to write effective press releases.

## TIP

Early in the morning on the first day of the open house, call the daily newspaper and television station(s), and ask to speak to the assignment editor. Brief the editor on the open house, stress the photo opportunities, and offer assistance in facilitating a story. Weekends are slow news days, and assignment editors, who should recognize the attraction and visual impact of local aviation-related stories, likely will welcome your call.

## INVITE THE PUBLIC!

The true mark of open house success is a full house and effective promotion is the key. Invite the press to the airport well in advance of your event: from the local newspaper, radio station, and the television station that covers your area (if you have a lot of local media, consider several small groups). Show off the airport, explain its value to the community, and cap off the experience by offering a free orientation flight. Your early efforts to develop a relationship with the media will help when it comes time to publicize your open house event, and could even result in some positive coverage for general aviation.

At least four months in advance of the open house, send notices of the event to regional and national aviation publications for inclusion in their calendar sections. Send flyers to all general aviation airports in the region, inviting pilots to attend the open house.

As your date approaches, use all mass media outlets—major and community newspapers, regional magazines, area television and radio stations, even bloggers located in your region—to secure public service announcements promoting the open house.

In addition to having paid and in-kind media advertisements promoting the event, Torrance Air Fair organizers distribute posters and 2,000 flyers (provided by a corporate sponsor) around the community. The flyer is inserted in the daily newspaper just prior to the open house. Organizers also secure permission from municipal authorities to erect Air Fair promotional banners across major streets in area cities.

Finally, two weeks in advance of the open house weekend, they provide 25 local movie theaters with a promotional slide—picturing an upside-down wing-walker—to display on screen prior to the start of a movie.

Along with advertising and promotion, seek prior editorial coverage of the event. Press releases are a staple of media prospecting, and AOPA offers excellent guidance on how to write effective press releases.

Torrance Air Fair organizers hold a media day 10 days in advance of the open house to give local media outlets plenty of time to research and produce stories. Another media day is held the day before the Air Fair opens. Typically, this features military aircraft and crews that will participate in the static display and fly-bys.

Invite television and radio stations to do live broadcasts from the airport during the event. Don't ignore the importance of post-show editorial coverage, especially on Sunday-night television news and in Monday morning newspapers. These are heavy viewer/reader opportunities that can help make an impression of the event in the minds of the public, resulting in better attendance next year.

## MEASURING SUCCESS

The last visitor has left the airport grounds. Tired volunteers are helping to pick up trash and collect equipment. A few stragglers from the static display line are preparing to depart. All that's left is to finish cleaning up and get over to the staff party in one of the corporate hangars. It's time to ask the Big Question: Was it a successful event?

Just how do you measure the success, or lack of it, of an airport open house? Attendance is an obvious yardstick. A crowd numbering in the tens of thousands has to be considered a success under any circumstances.

Sheer numbers don't tell the whole story, however. The "quality" of the audience is important. If you have good representation from influential people in the community—elected officials, administrators, business and civic leaders—and they voice satisfaction with the open house, that's an excellent measure of success. If exhibitors are happy with the results, that's also a good measure of success.

Financial results are also important in determining the success of the event. At

Losing money at the open house is a problem that calls for a thorough review of the process before planning begins for next year's show. "Profit" is in the eye of the beholder, however. A show that increases goodwill for the airport within the community is fundamentally successful. The goal should be to build on that aspect and work on turning around the financial performance.

This guide includes a comprehensive, generic event planning checklist (see page 17). It includes airshow, military, and warbird activities, but the list can be customized for your specific situation and agenda.

Consideration should be given to contributing a portion of your profits to local community

## TIPS

One area where an in-kind contribution can be especially effective is in promotion. Solicit area media—broadcast and print—for in-kind contributions by offering to trade sponsorship recognition at the open house for advertising and promotional space. One open house organizer offers to pay for promotional space or air time at a reduced rate in exchange for a presence at the event. It's hard for any business to turn down cash, so it's a successful tactic. For every \$500 in cash he spends with local media, he receives \$2,000 worth of print or broadcast advertisements.

Many television stations air an extended sports show Sunday evening to report the results of weekend games. This opens up time in the regular news segment—and an opportunity to fill that time with great airport openhouse images. Keep this in mind when talking to stations about coverage.

“A show that **increases goodwill** for the airport within the community is **fundamentally successful**.”

Torrance, Air Fair organizers want to finish the Air Fair having earned "seed money" to facilitate planning the next year's Air Fair. At Ft. Myers, Florida, the sponsoring EAA chapter has a financial goal for Aviation Days of maintaining a bank account reserve that would absorb losses the following year if the event were drowned out by a November storm.

charities—doing so will provide added positive public relations to the event and the airport community.

To garner interest in future events, it is of utmost importance to communicate effectively with participants and sponsors. Here are some sample letters you will want to customize and distribute to the correct parties.

# Sample Letters

## VIP INVITATION LETTER

[VIP guest's name]

[VIP's title, if appropriate]

[VIP's address]

[City, state, zip code]

Dear [Courtesy title, VIP's last name],

On [event date], [sponsoring organization] will be holding an open house at [airport name]. Because of your interest in [continued support of, significant contributions to] the airport, we would like to invite you to attend the event as our special guest.

The event begins at [time] and continues until [time]. It will include tours of the airport businesses and facilities; a display of the various types of aircraft that use [airport name], including training aircraft, business aircraft, helicopters, medivac aircraft, and restored vintage airplanes. Local civic organizations will serve breakfast and lunch for a nominal fee. In addition, area civic and service organizations will provide informational displays, and a children's area will feature clowns, face painting, and helium-filled balloons. Airplane rides will be available for a nominal contribution [to charity name, if appropriate].

As our special guest, we would like to offer you preferred parking, a personal guided tour of the airport, and access to our VIP lounge, which will be stocked with snacks and cold soft drinks.

We hope that you will be able to join us. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call our VIP coordinator, [name], at [telephone number].

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Title or position]



## SPONSOR RECRUITMENT LETTER

[Potential sponsor's name]

[Potential sponsor's title]

[Potential sponsor's address]

[City, state, zip code]

Dear [Courtesy title, potential sponsor's last name],

[Sponsoring organization] will be holding an open house at [airport name] on [event date]. Because of your company's strong commitment to serving our community [reliance upon the airport, continued support of the airport], we would like to discuss some sponsorship opportunities for the event with you.

Your financial support [use of vehicles, equipment, or services; promotional support; donation of food or soft drinks] will help us to conduct a high-quality, comprehensive event and provide an important service to the community. Of course, we would be pleased to discuss any other ways in which you might like to participate. In recognition of your support, [company name] will be mentioned prominently in our advertising and in the open house program, and we will extend VIP privileges to you and [insert number; may want to modify based on the amount of support] other [company name] employees.

The event will include tours of the airport businesses and facilities, as well as a display of the various types of aircraft that use [airport name]. Local civic organizations will provide food for a nominal fee. There will also be informational displays, a children's activity area, and airplane rides.

We hope that we can count on your support. I will call you soon to discuss this subject,

but if you have any questions, please call me at [telephone number].

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Title or position]

# Sample Letters (Continued)

## THANK YOU LETTER

[VIP or sponsor's name]  
[VIP or sponsor's title, if appropriate]  
[VIP or sponsor's address]  
[City, state, zip code]

Dear [Courtesy title, VIP or sponsor's last name],

Our recent open house at [airport name] was a tremendous success, and the result was due in part to your participation. On behalf of [sponsoring organization], I would like to thank you for attending [or, for your generous sponsorship].

We look forward to another open house in the future, and hope that we can count on your participation at that time. In the meantime, we appreciate your continued support of [airport name].

Thank you again for your role in our successful event.

Sincerely,

[Name]  
[Title or position]

## SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

News release  
April 30, 2001  
Contact: Michael Corrigan  
301-555-1234  
mcorrigan@directions.net

Carson County Pilots Association to Hold Open House for Public at County Municipal Airport on May 15

FREDERICK, MD – County Municipal Airport will welcome the public to an open house, sponsored by the Carson County Pilots Association, on Saturday, May 15. A wide variety of aircraft will be on display, and visitors will have an opportunity to see them up close and learn about them from the pilots who fly them and the specialists who maintain them. The event is free and open to all.

“We hope the public will come and share the adventure of flying with us,” said Mike Corrigan, president of the Carson County Pilots Association. “This is a chance to view the world of pilots who fly for business or family transportation, personal challenge, career development or just plain fun. The open house will be an exciting opportunity for everyone, especially for young people and older ones who have occasionally thought about learning to fly.

As County Municipal Airport Manager Phil Hangars points out, “It’s not always understood that the airport is an integral part of the community. Besides the jobs and income it provides directly, the airport is instrumental in creating community income by businesses and industries that use general aviation (i.e., non-airline) transportation to facilitate their operations.

“The airport open house will provide a wonderful opportunity to learn more about the airport’s role in the community, as well as experiencing the excitement of aviation first hand.”

[Add other details of open house, i.e. introductory flight lessons offered, sight-seeing flights available, food and beverage service, etc.]

For more information, contact Mike Corrigan at 301-555-1234.



# Event Planning Checklist/Outline

The checklist was provided by Centerpoint, an airshow management company based in Longwood, Florida. It is a compilation of 21 years of experience gathered by Robert B. Sheffield as he has organized and conducted airport open houses and airshows.

## I. EMERGENCY CONTINGENCY PLAN

### EMERGENCY ACCIDENT/INCIDENT PLAN

- Ensure it's in compliance with the Airport Emergency Plan

### MILITARY AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT

- Who's in charge?

### CIVILIAN AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT

- Identify critical times
- Identity possible incidents
  - Where accidents might occur
  - What kind of situation
  - Automobile accidents (on the way in/out)
  - Spectator/auto accident
  - Heat injuries
  - Aircraft on-site
  - Aircraft off-site
- Termination of alert
  - Whether the show must go on or be stopped

### EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

- Identify medical resources
  - City, county, state agencies, law enforcement agencies, emergency medical team(s), fire rescue team, hospital emergency plan, life-flight helicopter

## II. CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORIZATION FAA FORM 7711-2:

- Secure and coordinate with the local FSDO 120 to 90 days prior to the first event date. In accordance with AC 91-45C, Chapter 2, Section 1, paragraph 18c, an application for an aviation event must be submitted at least 45 days before the date of the scheduled event.
- Ensure you got what you requested: altitudes, wing-walkers (no seatbelts), parachutists, jet team, DoD, waiver, acro maneuvers. Forward a copy to your performers.

## III. MOA (MILITARY OPERATIONS AREA)

- Secured for press day

## IV. CONTRACTS REVIEWED

- Performers
- Concessions and novelties
- Independent contracted laborers

## V. INDEPENDENT SAFETY OBSERVER:

- Monitors the airshow and recognizes potential dangerous or unsafe conditions.

## VI. PERFORMER PACKETS

- Maps
- Show schedule
- Important phone numbers
- Accommodation arrangements
- Transportation plan
- Shuttle schedule/routes
- Party passes
- Local entertainment (conventioner booklets)
- Scheduled performer briefings
- Emergency contact form

## VII. STATIC DISPLAY AIRCRAFT

- Personnel sign-in sheet with phone numbers (in case of emergency)
- Static display aircraft list to the FBO
- Weight of aircraft (does not exceed weight capacity of the static display ramp)
- Arrival plan
- Departure plan
- Aircraft movement plan
- Flight plan on departure
- Parking plan
- Barriers/stanchions
- Chocks
- Refueling
- POL
- Signage (information & no smoking)
- Stairs (up and down)
- Tiedown availability

## VIII. TRANSPORTATION:

- Military team requirements
  - Maps in vehicles, fill gas tanks, special refueling procedures
- Performer requirements
- Bus schedule for static display aircraft
- Spectator transportation from parking area

## IX. QUARTERS/ ACCOMMODATIONS:

- Hotel Assignments
  - Civilian performers, military team, static display, dignitaries
- Smoking/nonsmoking rooms
- Single or double requirements

## X. AIRSHOW SITE:

### SAFETY BRIEFING ROOM

- Designate and inform participants on arrival

### EQUIPMENT

- Chairs, tables, charts
- Maps, paper, and pens available
- Weather information, FAA available
- Map of site; brief the announcer
- Public safety announcements
- Sponsor announcements
- Military teams brief/debriefing room  
Required information in accordance with AC 91-45C, Chapter 2, para. 25-27 Operations office/emergency command center
- Phone lines
- Fax machine
- Computer
- Typewriter
- Copy machine
- Office helpers

### MAP OF THE AREA

- Establish:
  - Crowd line, barrels, fencing, rope
  - Security
  - Aerobatics box
  - An outlined spectator area drawn on a map
  - Position and location of fire extinguishers and type
  - VIP area
  - Special needs area
  - Parking area
  - First aid area
  - Emergency medical equipment

### AIRPORT TENANTS (HOW DOES THIS SHOW INFRINGE ON THE AIRPORT TENANTS?)

- They will need access to:
  - Work area
  - Parking area
- Airshow insurance
  - Airshow liability
  - Accident (volunteers)
  - Property theft/damage
  - Workers compensation
  - Liquor liability
  - Fireworks
  - Pyrotechnics/Explosives
  - General liability
  - Weather insurance
  - Passenger liability
  - Product liability
  - Vehicle liability
  - Vehicle collision
- Fire marshal permits
- Concession company
  - Health permits
  - Resupply area
  - Communications
- Novelty company
  - Program sales staff
  - Resupply area
- Port-O-Lets
  - On site and servicing scheduled
  - Spectator facilities, handicapped facilities, commercial displays, parking area, VIP facilities, air boss, portable tower, military team requirements
- Public address system
  - Power (generator), amplifier, speaker and speaker stands, microphones, wireless
  - microphone
- Trash collection points
  - Scheduled clean-up after each show, dumpsters required, trash barrels on site, trash bags (it may be easier to pull a full bag out of the trash barrel, tie off to close and replace a trash bag in the barrel.)

- Volunteer check-in point
  - Lost-and-found booth
  - Map of the area, holding area for lost children, coloring books, stuffed animals, identification method, log-in sheet/who recovered the child?
- Public telephones
  - Commercial booth space/exhibits, sign-in area, military recruiters, chairs and tables, will fuel in the building be a problem (remote-control airplanes)?
- Media booth
  - Staffed, materials available, map of the area, credentials available, show schedule available
- Static displays
  - Roped off (if there is a requirement)
  - Fuel spills, signage, stairs (up and down)
- First aid room
  - Cots, water, EMS team properly staffed, communications
- Tents
  - Information booth, lost-and-found booth, lost-child booth, water trailers, ticketing area, corporate sponsors, performer autograph area, medical/first-aid parking area
- Airshow signage
  - Aircraft signage, parking signage, special-needs signage, off-airport signage, ticket booth signage and prices, first-aid locations

### XI. AIRPORT

- Alternate airport landing facilities (emergency landings)
- FOD (foreign object damage), determine clean-up
- Fire extinguisher/fire bottles
- Aerial photographs
- Keys to gates and hangers
- Airport signage
- Perimeter secure
- Taxiways and runways swept
- Aerobatics box sterile
- Jet team flight line in place
- Crowd line secure
- Grass mowed in parking area/pyro area (be cautious of warm mufflers on the dead grass.)
- Hangar space requirements
  - Civilian performer requirements, military team requirements, commercial display requirements
- Hangar servicing
  - Floors swept, bird droppings removed, electrical requirements, servicing hangar restrooms, fire extinguishers
- Establish “fly-in” policy
  - Fly-in parking area, ticketing procedures and method
- Hazmat team available
  - Determine spills, clean-up/plan and procedures, reporting procedures, waste management procedures
- Fire and rescue team
  - Aircraft rescue and firefighter, briefed of air-show schedule, types of different aircraft involved, map of area in ready room.

### XII. FIXED BASED OPERATOR (FBO)

- Ground support equipment
- Ramp crew (qualifications)
- FBO re-fuel plan
  - Who pays, method of payment, military credit card, military standard forms
- Tugs available and fueled
  - Tow bars, starter units
- POL available
- Fuel type and quantity availability
- Type of trucks and nozzle flow rate
- Fly-in aircraft servicing procedures
- Smoke oil
- Designated storage area, resupply truck, dispense method, hand pump/motor

### XIII. PARKING:

- Establish “hot ramp parking area” (later these vehicles could become a hazard to emergency vehicles or traffic)
- Parking plan
- Alternate parking plan (in case you lose your parking because of excessive rain)
- How are the spectators coming in?
- How are the spectators going out?
- Civilian police briefed
- Emergency routes
- Military teams route
- Performer route
- Adequate amount of parking attendants on site
- Alternate parking site (overflow parking)
- Handicapped parking availability
- Special needs
- VIP parking area
- Performer parking area
- Military teams parking area

### XIV. TRAFFICKING:

- Outside the air-show site
  - Arrival access roads
- Inside the airshow site
  - Intersection traffic to parking areas
- Hot ramp area
  - Proper vehicle authorization
- Emergency routes
- Performer routes

### XV. SECURITY:

- Established authorized “person on the hot ramp”
- Perimeter secure
- Copy of the credentials/security passes
- Ticket sellers
  - Start up cash/money float (change)
- Ticket takers
- Crowd line secure
- 24-hour security

### XVI. MEDICAL:

- Ambulance(s) on site
- Physician requirements
- Life Flight helo availability
- Local hospitals advised of event
- Signage to help locate a medical facility
- Communications

### XVII. COMMUNICATIONS:

- Ground operations requirements
- Air operations requirements
- Medical requirements
- Security requirements
  - Law enforcement, crowd control
- Parking attendants
- Radio sign-out sheet
- Cell phones
- Back-up equipment and chargers
- Communication net
  - Ground operations net, emergency net, security net, parking net

### XVIII. HOSPITALITY:

- Hangar party
  - Equipment, tables, chairs
- Caterer contract
- Band/DJ
  - Contract, staging, electrical
- Beverages
  - Beer and wine, method to identify minors, nonalcoholic
- Facility lighting
- VIP invitations
- Pilots lounge
  - Message centerboard, chairs, tables, phone (to contact unit or family)
- Meal schedule
  - Volunteers, staff



**XIX. CORPORATE SPONSORS:**

- Tents
- Tables/linens
- Chairs
- Catering
- Resupply
- Trash
- Security
- Credentials/passes/parking
- Area for military team guests

**XX. WATER:**

- Spectator
  - Fixed faucet locations, water buffalo(s), resupply, tent coverage cups, trash, ice signage
- Performers
  - Ice, cold drinks, water

**XXI. ON-SITE VEHICLES:**

- Establish vehicles on the hot ramp policy
- Establish refueling plan
- Key control and spare keys available
- Turn-in plan
- Golf carts
  - Rental agreement, quantity required, concessions requirements, medical requirements, insurance
- Automobiles
  - Military team requirements, performer requirements, special requirements, insurance
- Pick-up trucks
  - Performer requirements, smoke oil resupply, trash collection crew, hot pit transportation for performers
- Insurance

**XXII. SPECIAL SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS:**

- Heavy equipment
  - Crane (big enough to lift the largest aircraft; doesn't necessarily have to be on hand; however, on-call may be good planning)
- Generator(s) requirements for electricity

**XXIII. ACCOUNTING:**

- Determine performer method of payment schedule
- Advance payments to performers
- Military team advance payments
- Arrange for the handling and accounting of cash payments
- Checks signed on short notice
- Arrange for novelties closeout
- Arrange for concessions closeout
- Prepare air-show profit/loss statement
- Cash pick-up at ticketing booths

**XXIV. TICKETING:**

- Prior to the airshow:
  - Establish advance ticket sales
  - Monitor advance ticketing sales
  - Establish coupon redemption
- During the airshow
  - Arrange for qualified staffing
  - Staff each booth accordingly
  - Heavy-flow areas/low-flow areas
  - Arrange for cash pick-ups
  - Arrange for cash advance
  - Cash drawers/money bags/aprons
- Tents
  - Tents at each ticketing area
- Signage
  - Ticket prices
- Support
  - Water/ice/coolers
  - Food/lunches for staff

**XXV. MEDIA:**

- Advance publicity
- Use free social media
- Coordinate commercial television and radio time availability
- Research media buy
- Determine media plan (budget)
- Television commercials (30-second spots)
- Video
  - Background music track
  - Voice-over talent
  - Video production studio
  - Sponsors logo/placement/number of times shown
  - Produce "raw footage" tape for news stations
  - Acquire "on air" interview schedule

- Radio commercials (60-second spots)
  - Voice-over talent
  - Background music track
  - Sound recording studio
  - Acquire "on air" interview schedule
- Secure advance publicity materials
  - Jet team
  - Performers
  - History of airshow
  - Interesting numbers and facts
  - Photographs (8" x 10")
  - Video (3/4", Beta)
  - Narratives
- Publish the air-show advance publicity packet
  - Photographs
  - Narratives on performers
  - Particular specifications
  - Flight time
  - Hometown
  - Aircraft/make, model, engine type, use
  - Media booth location
  - Show schedule/times
- Establish and inform the media of a "briefing room" (This is helpful in gathering the media in case of an emergency)

**XXVI. SIGNAGE:****OUTSIDE THE AIRPORT**

- Direction signs to the parking area
- General public, performers, VIP, special needs
- Direction signs to the ticketing booths
- Ticketing/prices

**INSIDE THE AIRPORT**

- Commercial booths
- Static displays
- Medical stations

**GENERAL PUBLIC SIGNAGE**

- Restrooms, telephones, baby changing area, information, lost and found

**EXITING THE AIRPORT**

- Direction signage to control the flow of traffic



The information contained in this booklet is intended as a guide in understanding the rules, procedures, and policies applicable to planning and conducting an airport open house. It is not intended to replace the necessary research and review of applicable law or policies that may be required for a particular event. It is not intended to give legal advice or take the place of an attorney who can advise with respect to a particular situation. While every care has been exercised in the preparation of this booklet, AOPA can not and does not accept responsibility for an individual's reliance on its contents. Please share with us what does—and what does not—work for you at your open house event. We'll compile your reports and incorporate them into future updates of this publication.