Airport Noise Insulation
South San Francisco Fact Sheet & FAQ’s

The City of South San Francisco, in partnership with the San Francisco International Airport (SFO), is reaching out to all residents to inform them about the Airport’s new Replacement and Second Chance Noise Insulation Initiative program (Program) to provide noise insulation to eligible homeowners. The Program offers noise insulation work at no charge to eligible properties in order to mitigate the impact of aircraft noise to residences.

Noise insulation is funded through a combination of federal grant money from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and funding from the City and County of San Francisco and the Airport. The FAA determines eligibility by creating a 65 decibel Noise Exposure Map in 2019 (2019 Noise Map) around the Airport. Residential properties that fall within the contours of this Noise Map are likely eligible to apply for the Program. The current 2019 Noise Map for South San Francisco is available on the City’s website at www.ssf.net/Airportnoise.

If you own property in South San Francisco that falls within the 2019 Noise Map (map below), you may be eligible for the Program. If your property falls outside of the 2019 Noise Map, you are welcome to submit an application, and the Airport will consider these applications on a case-by-case basis. To apply for noise insulation work, visit SFO’s website at https://www.flysfo.com/replacement-and-second-chance-noise-insulation-initiative.

If you would like to learn more, please visit the City’s website at www.ssf.net/airportnoise. You can reach the City through dedicated hotline phone number (650) 829-6649 or email anip@ssf.net. Information collected from property owners will be shared with the Airport as SFO determines eligibility for the new program.
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What is the City’s role in undertaking noise insulation?
The City of South San Francisco previously administered its own noise insulation program and worked with property owners. The Airport will now administer the program and work directly with property owners. The City is committed to assisting property owners pursue eligibility from the Airport and will collect information from interested residents to share with the Airport in order to help residents receive noise insulation work.

What does the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) 65dB contour mean?
The 65 decibel Noise Exposure Map depicts an average of aircraft noise levels over a one year period using a time-weighted average of aircraft noise levels during heavy and light activity. The Noise Exposure Maps also take into account the periods when people are likely to be disturbed in the evening between 7:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. by adding a penalty of 4.77 decibels. For nighttime sleeping hours between 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m., a penalty of 10 decibels is added.

How does the FAA determine a 65dB contour for a City?
The Federal Noise Exposure Map is determined through the use of federally approved noise modelling software. The software considers the amount of aircraft operations over a year, the types of aircraft in use at the Airport, the distances being flown by aircrafts, specific runways used and the time of day these aircraft operated. The software calculates a noise grid, which is then connected to points of similar values, ultimately producing a noise contour typically in five decibel increments.

What if a home outside the Noise Exposure Map is impacted by aircraft noise?
The Airport has worked with the FAA to use contiguous contours that follow geographic boundaries, such as streets, water features, and open spaces. The Noise Exposure Maps often include adjacent streets taking in residences that may fall on or outside of the model’s computer generated contour line. You may still apply to SFO for noise insulation work; SFO will consider these applications individually.

What is the Replacement and Second Chance Noise Insulation Initiative Program?
The Program has two components: The Second Chance Initiative gives owners who did not participate in previous noise insulation programs a second chance to participate. The Replacement Initiative provides repair or replacement of eligible acoustical improvements to residential properties that were insulated in previous noise insulation programs, where the improvements have failed. You can learn more or apply on the SFO website at www.flysfo.com/community/noise-abatement/residential-sound-insulation-program.

How long does it take for the Airport to respond to an application and schedule the insulation work?
The Airport must go through a very lengthy process to verify eligibility with the FAA, perform acoustical testing, select and award the construction work to a contractor, and follow all federal grant guidelines. It may take several months for the Airport to confirm eligibility.

What are the eligibility criteria?
To be considered for either program, the residential property must be located inside a 2019 Noise Exposure Map for the Airport (“2019 Map”) formally accepted by the FAA. The 2019 Map shows contours for average noise levels at 65 dB or greater associated with aircraft activity. Additional criteria includes: (1) Construction or significant additions were built before October 1, 1998, (2) A physical survey of the property confirms preliminary eligibility, and (3) The results of acoustical tests in habitable rooms finalizes eligibility.

If my property is eligible, what type of insulation work can I receive?
Allowable improvements may include window and door replacement, caulking, weather-stripping, and installation of central fresh air ventilation (if the residence does not already have central ventilation). SFO will make the final determination and approve work.

More information: wwwssf.net/airportnoise
Contact the City: (650) 829-6649 or email anip@ssf.net