



## King County

Department of Transportation  
Airport Division

King County International Airport/Boeing Field

# Sound Insulation Program

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS KCIA'S SOUND INSULATION PROGRAM

### Program Qualification

#### **Q: Which homes are eligible to receive sound insulation improvements?**

A: Homes in noise contours from 69.5 dB DNL or greater within the Noise Mitigation Boundary, as outlined in KCIA's FAR Part 150 Study, are eligible to be in the Program.

#### **Q: What must I do in order to qualify for sound insulation improvements?**

A: According to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations, homes (except mobile homes) with an outside noise level of 65 dB DNL<sup>1</sup> or greater are eligible for interior noise testing unless they were constructed after October 1998. FAA rules also require the inside level of noise to be 45 dB DNL or greater in order to qualify for Airport-paid sound insulation improvements. Phase I of the Program's homes have been qualified by FAA based upon sample noise testing.

#### **Q: How will I know if my home is in Phase I and qualified for sound insulating improvements?**

A: You will receive a written confirmation letter from King County International Airport confirming that your home has been qualified for Phase I of the Program.

#### **Q: What if my home is not in Phase I?**

A: This is a multi-year Program and it is anticipated that it will take 10-12 years to complete all the qualified homes within the Noise Mitigation Boundary. The noisiest homes are first to be sound insulated (i.e. 74 dB) followed by homes in the 73 dB noise contour, 72 dB noise contour, and so forth.

### Program Timing

#### **Q: Which homes will be soundproofed first?**

A: KCIA has received FAA funding to launch a Pilot Program of ten homes and Phase I (200 additional homes). It is estimated that KCIA will be sound insulating approximately 100 homes each calendar year. The time to complete the entire program is contingent upon how many homes qualify and the amount of Federal and County funding available, but the program is estimated to continue for ten to twelve years.

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<sup>1</sup> DNL means the day-night annual average level of aircraft noise.

**Q: Why are homes on Beacon Hill going first?**

A: Homes located on Beacon Hill are in KCIA's noisiest noise contours; and FAA regulations require that the noisiest homes be mitigated first.

**Q: Who decides the sequence of homes receiving sound insulating improvements?**

A: The Airport Roundtable Advisory Committee decided that the priority order of homes sound insulated would be determined by decibel level, not by owner-occupied or tenant-occupied homes. In the event there are many homes within the same noise contour in more than one neighborhood, a "ratio" of residences<sup>2</sup> is calculated. Residences within the same noise contour that are "ready-to-go" will be first in line to have sound insulation products installed.

**Q: What if I want to delay participation in the Program? Do I have the option to enter again later?**

A: The Sound Insulation Program is completely voluntary. Homeowners who prefer not to participate at the time they are contacted by KCIA's construction contractor may complete and submit a Waiver of Participation form to KCIA. However, re-entry into the Program is entirely contingent upon available funding.

**Legal Requirements**

**Q: Why must I sign an Avigation Easement?**

A: The State of Washington prohibits cities, counties and municipal corporations from providing a gift to any individual, unless the individual is poor or infirm. Consequently, you will be required to sign an Avigation Easement (flyover rights) in exchange for the installation of insulating home improvements. KCIA will conduct a title search and the Avigation Easement is recorded with the title of your home as a permanent easement. The easement remains on the property and transfers with the property title to a new Homeowner if the home is sold.

**Q: Do I need to accept all of the recommended modifications to my home in order to participate in the program?**

A: The sound insulation package recommended for your home is a customized package designed to meet the required FAA guidelines for noise reduction. Therefore, each qualified home will receive the same type of acoustical windows, etc.; however, Homeowners will not be able to select from a variety of colors and styles.

**Q: The Sound Insulation Contract and Avigation Easement use terms I don't understand. May I have a lawyer look over these forms?**

A: Absolutely. These forms will become legally binding agreements, and you are entitled to know exactly what you are signing. Homeowners sometimes feel more comfortable after having their attorney review them first.

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<sup>2</sup> A percentage of qualified residences within the same noise contour are calculated from each neighborhood to determine a formula of candidate homes. For example, there are 69 homes in the 69 dB noise contour: 46 in Georgetown, 6 in Tukwila, and 17 in Beacon Hill. When construction begins, selection of homes will correspond to the percentage of homes by neighborhood, which in this case would be 67% from Georgetown, 8% from Tukwila, and 25% from Beacon Hill.

If you want any Program materials translated or interpreted, please contact Program staff at 206-205-0668 and it will be arranged. However, the Program will not reimburse Homeowners for legal services.

**Q: Will my utility bills change?**

A: In most cases, a sound insulated house operates more efficiently with less energy usage. After modifications, your house should perform better thermally, as well as acoustically.

**Q: Will my property taxes go up?**

A: According to Scott Noble, King County Assessor, "The cost of sound insulation improvements (i.e. retrofitting windows and/or doors) is not directly included in a property's valuation."

**Design and Construction Phases**

**Q: Who will contact me about installation of insulation home improvements?**

A: The Airport's staff from the Sound Insulation Program will coordinate all visits for design/engineering and construction, making appointments a minimum of 48 hours in advance by phone or in writing. All sound insulation program representatives will wear Airport identification while working at your home. Homeowners are never asked for money or credit card information, or asked to sign anything that includes a dollar amount. If anyone—other than an airport representative--contacts you on behalf of this program, please contact the Airport immediately at 206-205-0668.

**Q: May I choose my window and door styles?**

A: Unfortunately, no. The recommended sound insulation package for your home will be designed to meet the required FAA guidelines for noise reduction; and it is necessary to obtain manufacturer's warranties on all insulation products.

**Q: What if I recently remodeled my home and added new windows and doors. Can I be reimbursed for my window and door expenses?**

A: New windows and/or doors added by the Homeowner prior to participation in this Program are not eligible for reimbursement according to FAA regulations. Also, any additions made to the home after the completion of the sound insulation modifications are not eligible for future treatment.

Normally, windows manufactured for building supply retailers do not have sufficient STC (Standard Transmission Class) ratings. The higher the STC rating, the thicker the glazing (glass) and greater noise reduction occurs. Moreover, the windows KCIA will specify for this Program have a 44 STC rating because a higher STC rating (such as 47) would be too heavy for homeowners to clean and maintain.

**Q: How much will it cost me to mitigate my home?**

A: If your home qualifies for mitigation, there will be no cost to you as the Homeowner.

**Q: Is there a warranty on the products installed?**

A: Yes. There will be manufacturer's warranties on the windows and doors, as well as standard warranties on all other products used. Normally, a one-year warranty is provided on the contractor's installation.