



Federal Communications Commission Washington, D.C. 20554

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Opportunities to Reduce Bird Collisions with Communications Towers While Reducing Tower Lighting Costs

On December 4, 2015, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) revised its advisory circular that prescribes tower lighting to eliminate the use of L-810 steady-burning side lights on towers taller than 350 ft. Above Ground Level (AGL). See http://www.faa.gov/documentLibrary/media/Advisory_Circular/AC_70_7460-1L.pdf. While the FAA made this change to reduce the number of migratory bird collisions (by as much as 70%), it also reduces construction and maintenance costs to tower owners. Implementing this type of lighting on towers that received an FAA Study prior to the release of the new advisory circular can be achieved through a simple application process with the FAA and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

The FAA and FCC recognize that:

- Birds are attracted to non-flashing red lights, such as L-810 side-marker lights; and
- Birds are much less attracted to flashing lights on towers, such as L-864 and L-865 lights.

A "lighting deviation" can be used to extinguish or eliminate L-810 steady-burning side lights from an existing registered tower, and typically the FAA quickly approves such a request. The following steps are necessary:

1. File a Marking and Lighting study electronically with the FAA (<https://oeaaa.faa.gov/oeaaa/external/portal.jsp>) requesting the elimination or omission of steady-burning lights (L-810) with Form 7460-1, Notice of Proposed Construction or Alteration. Designate structure type: "Deviation from Red Obstruction Light Standards."
2. Once the FAA has approved the request and assigned a FAA Study Number, file Form 854 with the FCC via the Antenna Registration System (ASR). Please select "MD – Modification" and choose the appropriate FAA Lighting Style.¹ The FCC will typically approve the application and modify the registration within 24 hours.
3. Once the lighting change for a tower has been granted by the FCC via ASR, the steady-burning, side-marker, L-810 tower lights can be extinguished. This is typically accomplished in the tower transmission building and does not ordinarily require climbing the tower. Per the FAA requirements, flashing red lights should flash at 30 FPM (+/- 3 FPM).

The elimination of continuously burning security lights under towers will also minimize bird attraction to the site and reduce energy costs. Many tower operators use down-shielded, motion sensor-triggered security lighting, which promotes tower safety and reduces the possibility of attracting migratory birds.

¹ If the FAA grants a lighting deviation referencing an advisory circular other than 70/7460-1L, select "3. Other" and describe the lighting in the field provided. If the FAA issues a new Study referencing 70/7460-1L, select the lighting style that corresponds to the lighting in the FAA Study.