

2/26/2025

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

2025-41/7-1

To: Airport Manager, John Wayne-Orange County Airport, (SNA), CA, FAA (ATM 2205366
SNA Tower, ATM SCT TRACON, AAS-1)

Info: FAA (Director of Air Traffic Operations WSA, AAS-300, AVP-1, AVP-200, AWP-600,
AFS-260, AFS-200, AJI-144, Runway Safety Team), A4A, AAAE, ALPA, AOPA, APA,
ASAP, ATSAP, ATSG, CAPA, IATA, ICASS, IFALPA, IPA, NATCA, NBAA, NTSB,
RAA, SWAPA

From: Becky L. Hooey, Director
NASA Aviation Safety Reporting System

Re: SNA Airport Tower Closure Procedures

We recently received ASRS reports describing a safety concern that may involve your area of operational responsibility. We do not have sufficient details to assess either the factual accuracy or possible gravity of the report. It is our policy to relay the reported information to the appropriate authority for evaluation and any necessary follow-up. We feel you should be aware of the enclosed deidentified report.

To properly assess the usefulness of our alert message service, we would appreciate it if you would take the time to give us your feedback on the value of the information that we have provided. Please contact Dr. Becky Hooey at (408) 541-2854 or email at becky.l.hooey@nasa.gov.



Aviation Safety Reporting System
P.O. Box 189 | Moffett Field, CA | 94035-0189



ACN 2205366**DATE / TIME**

Date of Occurrence	202501
Local Time Of Day	1201 to 1800

PLACE

Locale	SCT.TRACON
State	CA

AIRCRAFT / EQUIPMENT X

ATC / Advisory - TRACON	SCT
Make Model Name	Any Unknown or Unlisted Aircraft Manufacturer

PERSON 1

Function - Air Traffic Control	Approach
ASRS Report Number	2205366

EVENTS

Anomaly	ATC Issue - All Types
Anomaly	Deviation / Discrepancy - Procedural - Published Material / Policy
Anomaly	Ground Event / Encounter - Other / Unknown
Detector - Person	Air Traffic Control
Result - Air Traffic Control	Provided Assistance

NARRATIVE 1

SNA Tower evacuated and we went ATC 0. I work SCT TRACON and not having a Tower to a busy airport feels unsafe. The 7110 has some procedures for this but it's not meant for the middle of the day and busy, so we improvised. Arrival sector Tustin had CTAF on speaker to listen to when the aircraft would land. We would take that as cancellation of IFR. Then the next arrival could go in. The departures I'm not sure what grey legal measures were used. This operation has happened at least 4 times and its unsafe. There's no good procedures for it. Also management thinks SNA is still a class C. During all this we (the TRACON) conducted a Runway change, again without a Tower. Once we had turned the airport around one aircraft got away from us and departed opposite direction from everyone else. At the same time its not the aircraft's fault since its an uncontrolled airport.

We need better procedures for this. We need clarification on canceling IFR vs landing. What would the spacing for departures be? Is a temporary non-towered airport still class C?

SYNOPSIS

SCT Controller reported SNA Tower has closed four times due to evacuation. Reporter states lack of established procedures to manage the traffic and confusion over airspace status created an unsafe environment.