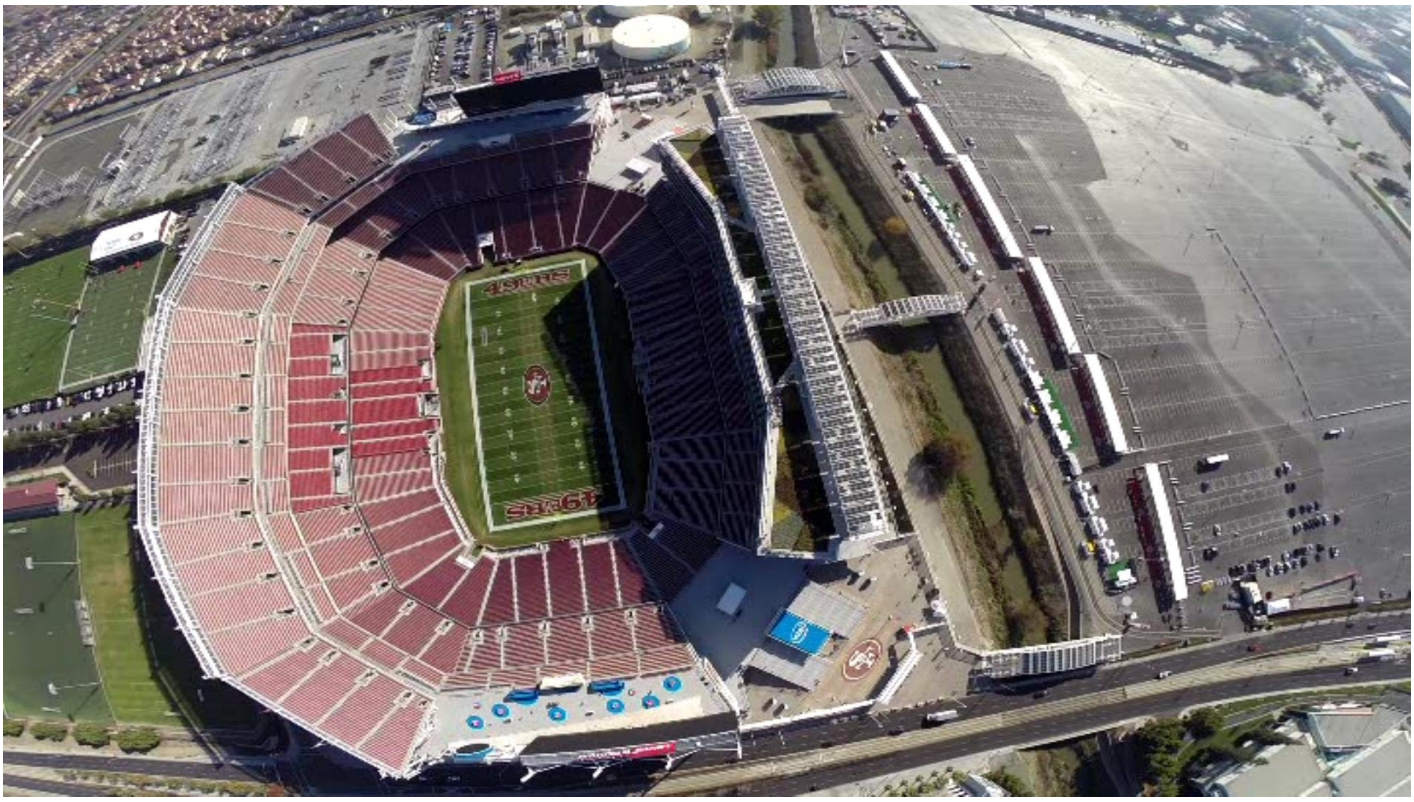
PILOTS FILE COMPLAINTS ABOUT 'BLINDING' LIGHTS AT 49ERS' LEVI'S STADIUM

News / Airlines



A commercial airline **pilot** says she once saw something resembling a laser light show coming out of **Levi's Stadium**.

Unable to look outside for more than moments at a time on that night in March, Christina Kurowicki said, "We were really worried about getting the aircraft on the ground safely."

According to a report by NBC Bay Area, Kurowiki isn't the only pilot to have such an experience flying over the Santa Clara home of the San Francisco 49ers, which just happens to be in the flight path for one of the runways of nearby San Jose Mineta International Airport.

"It was blinding. It was blinding," said Kurowiki, who filed a complaint with the Federal Aviation Administration after the incident. "Incapacitating for sure."

NBC Bay Area said it found at least five other instances of pilots voicing concern about the intensity of the light coming from the stadium. One pilot said in a complaint filed with NASA that the "extreme visual distraction" could cause "flicker vertigo for pilots."

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Another said a sign on top of the stadium could be mistaken for a runway during bad weather, "leading an unsuspecting crew to mistakenly correct to the left while descending and subsequently put them on a collision course with the stadium itself."

According to the NBC Bay Area, NASA has sent two safety alert bulletins to the FAA, San Jose Mineta International Airport and Santa Clara's Stadium Authority about the problem. And in 2014 the FAA issued a safety alert bulletin for pilots.

FAA public affairs manager Ian Gregor said in a statement that most of the reports it reviewed were from incidents that occurred on nights when the scoreboard was being calibrated.

"The FAA relayed these concerns to the stadium operator, which agreed to provide the FAA with advance notice of all scoreboard testing and not to test or calibrate it at night during scheduled airfield hours," Gregor wrote.

The 49ers said in a statement that "stadium management actively collaborates with the FAA as it relates to large-scale events held at Levi's Stadium and has not been made aware of any concerns with the stadium's video boards since last year when the boards were being initially tested and calibrated."

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