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# Area 51 Law

*Laws and Land Orders related to Area 51.*

## Who Controls Area 51?

The 6 by 10 mile block of land that was known as Area 51 with withdrawn by the AEC in [Public Land Order 1662](#) on June 28, 1958. The NTS Draft EIS (Jan. 1996, v.1, page 4-9) states: "Under Public Land Order 1662 (June 20, 1958), approximately 38,400 acres were reserved for the use of the Atomic Energy Commission in connection the the NTS. Management of this land has since been delegated to the U.S. Air Force." Inquiries to DOE yielded this [1996 statement](#), while FOIA requests to DOE have brought vague national security denials, implying (to us) that any agreement between DOE and the AF is secret. This means that Area 51 is indeed a no man's land -- neither controlled by DOE nor confirmable by the Air Force. (The AF only acknowledges that they do have "facilities at Groom Dry Lake," not that they control the land or the entire base.)

We still don't know...

- When the land gained the "Area 51" designation.
- When and how Area 51 was turned over to the Air Force.
- Under what authority the Groom Lake land was used by the military and DOE prior to June 20, 1958.

One revealing tidbit: The Tonopah Test Range is referred to as **Area 52** in the DOE/NV internal phone book (June 1990). If Areas 53-55 exist, we expect they are satellite sites. For example, if there was an area number for the Project Faultless site (about 100 miles north of the NTS), we would expect it to be numbered in the 50s. This orderly view of the universe is belied only by Area 13, which is a plutonium dispersal site on Air Force land north of Area 51. Perhaps 50s numbers refer to areas of joint AF/DOE control.

## Other Land Actions

[Public Law 98-485](#) that withdrew the Groom Mountain area for the Nellis Air Force Range. 10/17/84. [[Abstract](#)]

- [Public Law 99-606](#): Withdrawals Of Public Lands For Military Purposes. 11/11/86. [[Abstract](#)]
- [Memorandum of Understanding](#) for joint Air Force/DOE use of Pahute Mesa.
- See [Basecamp Airfield](#) for land orders regarding that facility (on US-6 north of Warm Springs).
- [Description of Lands in Nellis Range](#) from the [Nellis Range Renewal Process](#).

## U.S. Code

1. United States Code - [Title 18, Chapter 37: Espionage And Censorship](#)\*
  - [§ 795](#).\* Photographing and sketching defense installations
  - [§ 796](#).\* Use of aircraft for photographing defense installations
  - [§ 797](#).\* Publication and sale of photographs of defense installations
2. United States Code - [Title 42, Chapter 82](#)\*, Subchapter VI: Federal Responsibilities
  - [§ 6961](#).\* Application of Federal, State, and local law to Federal facilities. [Cited in [Presidential exemption](#).]
3. United States Code - [Title 43: Public Lands](#)\*

## Other

1. [Presidential Determination No. 95-45](#): Determination Exempting USAF from Conservation Laws. 9/29/95
  - [Letter From The President](#) informing the Speaker Of The House and the President of the Senate about Presidential Determination No. 95-45. 1/31/96.

## External Resources

1. [The Legal Information Institute: Cornell Law School](#)
  - [United States Code](#)
2. [The U.S. House of Representatives Internet Law Library](#)
  - [Federal Register](#)
  - [Code of Federal Regulations](#)

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## Topics

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## General Links

- [Third Presidential Exemption for Area 51](#)+ - By [Bill Clinton](#) - Published: 9/27/97 <11/29/97 #1>
- [Annual A51 Presidential exemption overdue](#)+ (21 lines) - Message - Published: 10/19/98 - Source: Ufomind (Mailing List)

[Posted by Vernon J. Brechin] <10/19/98 #2>

- [Draft EIS for Nellis Range renewal](#)+ (83 lines) - Message - Published: 10/19/98 - Source: Ufomind (Mailing List) [Posted by Vernon J. Brechin] <10/19/98 #3>
- [DOE gives up Area 51](#)+ (25 lines) - Message - Published: 12/16/99 - Source: Ufomind (Mailing List) [Posted by Glenn Campbell, Las Vegas] <12/16/99 #5>
- [Further research on early Groom PLOs](#)+ - By Steve Hauser <1/20/2000 #6>

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