

# Airport Noise Frequently Asked Questions

## 1. How does the weather and season affect aircraft noise?

Individuals will notice an increase in aircraft noise during warmer months when windows are open and people spend more time outside. During hot and muggy summer days and aircraft's climbing performance decreases; aircraft therefore remain lower longer and more power is required to climb-out. More noise is also experienced during the warmer months, largely due to the moisture content in the air. On a bad-weather day, a low cloud ceiling will insulate noise, and this may be especially apparent with helicopter operations.

## 2. Are there regulations on how low aircraft can be?

There are three phases of aircraft operation: departure, landing and cruising. When aircraft – whether fixed-wing or helicopters- are taking off or landing, there are no minimum altitude requirements. Because of their maneuverability, helicopters can also get a Special Visual Flight Rule (SVFR) clearance that allows them to fly below the basic VFR weather minimums. This is especially important during medivac (medical helicopter transport) operations.

## 3. Why are planes allowed to take off and land late at night?

Martha's Vineyard Airport is a public use airport and as such is required by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week and available to all aircraft. The Air Traffic Control Tower closes at 10 p.m., but aircraft still may operate after that time.

A Voluntary Nighttime Noise Abatement, no departures exceeding 75 dB between 10pm and 6am, is in effect from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. daily. Nov 1 – May 14, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. The tail numbers of aircraft using Martha's Vineyard Airport during the curfew period are recorded by a contracted company, and forwarded to airport administration. If a "violation" of the voluntary noise curfew is identified, an advisory letter and information about the Martha's Vineyard Airport Noise Abatement Program is then sent to the owner/operator in question. Although the curfew is voluntary, and no penalties exist, activity during the air traffic control tower (May 15- Oct 31, 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. daily and Nov 1 – May 14, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily) time periods is less than during normal hours of operation.

## 4. Can the airport change flight patterns?

A number of factors determine which runway to use for arrivals and departures, or which course to take. These include the judgement of the air traffic controller (during Control Tower hours of Operation), the wind and other weather, surrounding air traffic, the capabilities of the aircraft, and the judgement and capabilities of the pilot. No attempt is made to use each runway an equal number of times within any given time period, or to fly over a particular neighborhood at any given interval. Safety is always Martha's Vineyard Airport's primary concern.

## 5. Are newer jets bigger or louder?

The newer business and commercial jets are the most technologically advanced and quietest aircraft in service. It is the somewhat smaller and older jet aircraft that are often the noisiest. In December 1999 the FAA completed a phase-out of the majority of the older and louder jet aircraft that weigh more than 75,000 pounds – these are mostly commercial aircraft. No such phase-out, however, was mandated for aircraft weighing less than 75,000 pounds.

**6. If aircraft noise can be a problem, why is the airport so close to residential neighborhood?**

Martha's Vineyard Airport opened in 1942 by the US Navy and handed over to the County of Dukes County in 1959, and has experienced ebbs and flows in service based on customer demand and cultural changes. A majority of the residential developments around the airport were built long after the airport, and even today, new residential development and redevelopment abounds in the surrounding area.

**7. What benefit does Martha's Vineyard Airport bring to Dukes County?**

MVY is a premier travel and economic engine both for Martha's Vineyard and New England. In addition to meeting the great customer demand, the airport generates an annual economic output of more than \$140 million. More than 1,400 jobs are attributable in some way to the facility. It has opened many great travel opportunities for area residents, and has opened the region to those wanting to experience our history, culture, environment, all with the resultant economic benefit.

**8. How can I make a noise complaint?**

On our website: <https://mvyairport.com/noise-complaints-2/>

**9. What happens when I place a noise complaint? What does the airport do with that information?**

We research all complaints. When we receive multiple complaints from one operation, and if we are able to identify the aircraft, we will contact the operator, discuss their reason for the activity in question, review our noise abatement procedures with them, and contact the complainant(s) if needed. We log all complaints and use the information to identify any unexpected or unusual patterns of activity.

**10. There is a "Noise Ordinance" in my town; is the airport in violation it permits aircraft to fly at all hours?**

No. As noted above, airport access is regulated by Federal Law, and as such, supersedes state and local ordinances.

**11. Is the airport expanding?**

No.

**12. There was a pilot obviously flying too low or in an unsafe manner. Can I report him?**

If you witness aircraft flying in an unsafe manner, please contact the FAA Boston Flight Standards District Office at 781-238-7550.

[https://www.faa.gov/about/office\\_org/field\\_offices/fsdo/bos/local\\_more/media/LowFly.pdf](https://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/field_offices/fsdo/bos/local_more/media/LowFly.pdf)