



Rhode Island Airport Corporation

Airport Noise Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is the sole authority that controls and regulates airspace, aircraft, airports, flight procedures, and aircraft noise. RIAC has no jurisdiction or authority to regulate aircraft activity, flight procedures, or aircraft noise. Air Traffic Controllers (ATC) are employed by the FAA with a responsibility for safe and efficient movement of aircraft on the ground and in the air. They use established standard operating procedures and a systematic flow to keep aircraft at safe distances from one another as part of the national airspace system. RIAC is responsible for operating and maintaining airport facilities and for ensuring runways (and taxiways and other facilities) are in good working conditions, meet FAA regulations, and are available for use. Thus, RIAC cannot direct aircraft when to arrive/depart, which routes to fly nor can it regulate aircraft noise. When it comes to aircraft noise, RIAC's purpose is to help foster communication between the airport, FAA and local community.

State and local governments are not permitted to regulate any type of aircraft operations, such as flight paths, altitudes, or the navigable airspace. Additionally, cities and municipalities are not permitted to have their own rules or regulations governing the operation of aircraft.

Below are **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)** related to aircraft operations and noise.

OPERATIONS

1. Do pilots, airlines or FAA Air Traffic Control need my permission to fly over my house?

No. Pursuant to United States Code 49 USC 40103, The United States Government, specifically the Federal Aviation Administration, has exclusive sovereignty of airspace of the United States, and thus do not need your permission. It is also important to note that they do not need a U.S. airport's permission to land at a runway.

2. Who makes flight decisions at the airport?

The FAA Air Traffic Control and the individual pilots determine which runways are used and aircraft flight paths. The FAA has exclusive sovereignty of airspace of the United States, and thus RIAC has no control or legal authority in this area.

3. What are PVD's hours of operation, and why are aircraft allowed to take off and land late at night or early morning?

T.F. Green is a public use airport and as such is required by the FAA to be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week and available to all aircraft operators. Commercial airlines, cargo operators, and private and corporate pilots determine when they land or take-off. U.S. Airports, municipalities, and states are prohibited from interfering in where flights could be in the air.



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Actually, when a flight leaves the ramp/terminal parking, the tower takes the jurisdiction and starts guiding the pilots.

4. Is there a specific time during the year that PVD's flight activity increases?

Flight activities are planned according to demand, which differs throughout the year. The demand on the commercial airlines' side is determined by the passengers.

5. How is a particular runway selected for use at T.F. Green Airport (PVD), and what causes aircraft to take off in the direction of my home?

The FAA Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT), not RIAC, determines which runway ends are in use on a given day based upon the prevailing wind conditions and other operational factors. The prevailing wind at the runway determines the initial direction of flight. Aircraft take-off and land into the wind.

6. When do most aircraft arrive or depart at T.F. Green (PVD)?

Aircraft arrive and depart at various times throughout a 24-hour period. Typically, most departures are early mornings, with most arrivals occurring in the early and late evening hours.

7. Isn't T.F. Green (PVD) in violation of local noise ordinance by the hours the aircrafts are allowed to fly?

When Federal law and state/ local laws conflict, federal law preempts (i.e., takes precedence over) state or local laws. T.F. Green is regulated by the FAA and federal law, and thus the federal laws supersedes state laws and local ordinances. Cities and municipalities are not permitted to have their own rules or regulations governing the operation of aircraft.

8. Is there a legal minimum altitude that airplanes can fly over residential areas?

Federal Aviation Regulations (FARs) specify a minimum altitude of 1,000 feet over congested areas and 500-feet over non-congested areas. There is an exception to this rule: helicopters and aircraft that are in the process of taking off or landing.

9. What is the minimum altitude for helicopters?

According to FAA, a helicopter may be operated at less than 500 –feet, provided each person operating the helicopter complies with any routes or altitudes specifically prescribed for helicopters by the FAA.

See: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2011-title14-vol2/pdf/CFR-2011-title14-vol2-sec91-115.pdf>



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10. Where can I find the specific flight that flew over my neighborhood?

You may use T. F. Green's flight tracker located at: [Providence Airport - flight tracker \(casper.aero\)](http://Providence Airport - flight tracker (casper.aero))

11. How can I report a pilot obviously flying too low or in an unsafe manner?

If you witness aircraft flying in an unsafe manner, please contact the FAA's Flight Standards District Office at (866) 835-5322 or the FAA's General Aviation and Commercial Division at (202) 267- 8212.

NOISE

12. What is considered airport noise?

Airport noise is considered any noise created by an aircraft taking off, landing, overflying, and taxiing on the ground at the airport.

13. How does the FAA assess overall aircraft noise exposure?

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) requires the use of the Day-Night Average Sound Level (DNL) as the primary metric for aircraft noise exposure. DNL is not a typical average, but instead is a cumulative measure of all noise exposure during a 24-hour period, whether it is a loud event or a quieter event, increases the DNL value. To reflect the added intrusiveness of noise between the nighttime hours of 10 p.m. and 7 a.m., DNL counts each nighttime noise event as if it occurred 10 times. FAA noise evaluations typically average daily DNL values over a one-year period to account for daily or seasonal fluctuations in aircraft operations, runway use and weather conditions. FAA considers all residential land uses to be incompatible with aircraft noise at annual-average exposure levels at or above DNL 65 decibels (dB).

14. How do airport ground operations contribute to overall noise exposure near airports?

Aircraft ground operations may include aircraft idling, taxiing, pre-flight run-ups of propeller aircraft, and start-of-takeoff roll. Typically, however, noise from airborne flight operations (i.e. aircraft departures and arrivals) dominates overall noise exposure near airports. Although aircraft ground operations sometimes are audible near airports, generally they are quieter than airborne aircraft when heard in community locations. Ground operations noise often is reduced by interaction with the ground ("ground effects") and shielding provided by terrain and other obstructions. Because these factors are less likely to reduce noise levels from airborne departures or arrivals, the louder flight operations dominate noise exposure and ground operations noise seldom makes a significant contribution to DNL.



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15. If airport noise can be a problem, why are residential areas so close to the airport?

T.F. Green was opened in 1931. A majority of the residential developments around the airport were built long after the airport, and even today, new residential development and redevelopment occurs in some surrounding areas.

16. Does weather affect aircraft noise?

In cloudy and foggy weather, aircraft noise is amplified due to the cloud cover containing the noise near the ground. During hot and muggy summer days, an aircraft's climbing performance decreases; aircraft therefore remain lower longer and more power is required for climb-out, causing more noise. More noise is also experienced during the warmer months, largely due to the moisture content in the air.

17. Why is airport noise louder at night than during the day?

At night, the ambient noise is lower, which makes airport noise appear louder than during the day.

18. Do areas of tree and other vegetation near airports reduce aircraft noise?

Trees and vegetation around airports are more likely to affect sound levels caused by aircraft when they are on the ground than when they are in the air. When airborne aircraft are sufficiently high above the ground that trees do not break the line of sight from the listener, the trees provide no noise reduction. When trees break the line of sight from the listener to an aircraft on the ground, a relatively broad area of dense vegetation is required to provide a noticeable reduction in sound.

19. What are the other possible effects of trees and other vegetation near airports?

Even when not providing measurable noise reduction, vegetation can influence a listener's perception of the noise environment in other ways. Trees can provide a visual buffer and thereby eliminate a visual reminder of one's proximity to an airport or other noise source. Trees scatter the very high frequency sounds that can convey "mechanical harshness," and also may provide a type of forest reverberation further reducing harshness and the impulsive nature of some noise sources. "In addition, wind motion through leaves produces a pleasant sound, which can partially mask more annoying sounds." Although these effects do not reduce the overall noise level, they may affect the listener's perception of the noise environment and thereby decrease annoyance.



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20. Has T. F. Green undertaken a 14 CFR Part 150 study?

Yes, T. F. Green was among the first airports in the country to participate in the Federal Aviation Administration's Noise and Land Use Compatibility Program, commonly referred to as Part 150. This study was conducted in 1999, and an updated study was conducted in June 2010.

21. Does the airport have a curfew?

Cities and municipalities are not permitted to have their own rules or regulations governing the operation of aircraft. Through the 14 CFR Part 150 process, a **voluntary** curfew for operations between midnight and 6:00 a.m. was implemented. The FAA, has exclusive sovereignty of airspace of the United States, and thus RIAC has no control or jurisdiction on when aircraft operate at PVD. RIAC does track operations between midnight and 6 a.m., and are available for review within the quarterly noise reports found at:

<https://www.pvdairport.com/corporate/environment/noise-management>

22. Are pilots required to follow noise abatement procedures?

Through the 14 CFR Part 150 process, the FAA implemented the use of noise abatement corridors. The FAA Air Traffic Control Tower issues a departure heading associated with one of the Part 150 corridors based on the aircraft's destination. Pilots, however, proceed on their FAA departure heading when deemed safe to do so.

23. How much noise qualifies my home for noise mitigation, and when?

See Question #13.

The latest round of sound insulation was completed in 2018. Further noise analysis and potential mitigation will only be initiated when PVD experiences a significant increase in operations, which will likely not happen for many years due to COVID-19 impacts on air travel. A significant increase above the 2018 operations numbers will be required to justify to the FAA the need for conducting a Noise Exposure Map (NEM) update. Only after the NEM update is complete, and additional homes are deemed eligible, will residents be contacted (assuming appropriate FAA funds are available).

24. I am thinking of buying a house, how do I find out if it is near an airport flight corridor?

The best way to experience the noise level is to visit the home at different periods of the day and night. Additionally, T.F. Green's flight tracking system may be helpful to show daily flight paths in relation to a specific address. [Providence Airport - flight tracker \(casper.aero\)](https://www.casper.aero)



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25. How are “flight paths” determined?

Flight paths are determined by the FAA Air Traffic Controllers based upon wind direction on any given day. The heading by which aircraft turn to is determined upon the direction of the final destination. Through the 14 CFR Part 150 process, the FAA implemented the use of noise abatement corridors beginning in June 2001. There are a total of eight corridors, comprised of at least one departure corridor per runway and one arrival corridor for Runway 34. Further description of these corridors can be viewed within the quarterly noise reports located at:

<https://www.pvdairport.com/corporate/environment/noise-management>

26. What can RIAC do to control noise in the community, and what can't RIAC do?

When it comes to aircraft noise, RIAC's purpose is to help foster communication between the airport, FAA and local community. Pursuant to the [Airport Noise Capacity Act of 1990](#) (ANCA), only the FAA can approve restrictions. Additionally, RIAC is unable to mandate curfews, restrict where and when aircraft fly, dictate aircraft arrival or departure times, or restrict flights from flying over residential neighborhoods. Pursuant to United States Code 49 USC 40103, the United States Government, specifically the FAA, has exclusive sovereignty of the National Airspace System (NAS) over the United States.

27. Where can I submit a noise complaint?

You can also submit noise complaints directly to the FAA by calling (202)265-3521 or emailing 9-awa-noiseombudsman@faa.gov. More information regarding the FAA's noise procedures may be found at [Noise \(faa.gov\)](#). You may also submit noise complaints to T.F. Green using this link: <https://flighttracker.casper.aero/pvd/complaint/index.php>. Additionally, you can also call T.F. Green's Noise Hotline at (401)732-3621. The line is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. However, please be advised that even if there is a complaint, RIAC cannot restrict where and when aircraft fly, dictate aircraft arrival or departure times, or restrict flights from flying over residential neighborhoods.

28. What happens when I place a noise complaint, and what does RIAC do with that information?

For RIAC, when a noise complaint is filed, the complaint is logged and reviewed. However, please be advised that even if there is a complaint, RIAC cannot restrict where and when aircraft fly, dictate aircraft arrival or departure times, or restrict flights from flying over residential neighborhoods. If you witness aircraft flying in an unsafe manner, please contact the FAA's Flight Standards District Office at (866) 835-5322 or the FAA's General Aviation and Commercial Division at (202) 267-8212.



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29. Where can the community find more information on airport noise?

More information can be found on our website under noise management: <https://www.pvdairport.com/corporate/environment/noise-management> and/or at [Noise \(faa.gov\)](#)

30. Does RIAC publish noise reports?

Yes. On the website, under the Noise Management Tab, scroll to number 3, Quarterly Airport Operations Report. <https://www.pvdairport.com/corporate/environment/noise-management>