

# CONCERNED ABOUT AIRCRAFT NOISE?

*2017 Update*



## **A practical guide to what you can do to make your views known and help effect change for the better**

While Stop Stansted Expansion's focus is on fighting the expansion threat, we also recognise that current noise levels, especially from overflying aircraft, are already a problem across the region.

If you're concerned about aircraft noise from Stansted's current operations, this leaflet will help you to make your views known in a way which will help to address specific problems now and make way for better systems of noise management and aircraft track keeping in the future.



**STOP  
STANSTED  
EXPANSION**

# Noise From Stansted Airport's Operations

Few people are disturbed by natural sounds such as waves breaking on the beach or birdsong, even though the levels can be quite high. Man-made sources of sound such as noise from aircraft are another matter however and can affect quality of life, sleep, performance at school and even, in some cases, health.

The growth of Stansted Airport over recent decades has brought with it more noise both from overflying aircraft and those on the ground waiting to take off, not to mention increased ground noise close to the airport.

If you're disturbed by noise, you may want to make a formal complaint.

## When To Complain

You should complain to the airport about aircraft noise if you think an aircraft was either excessively noisy, too low or off-track. There are complicated rules about noise and track keeping, explained in further detail on our website, but in general you will have to rely on your own awareness of what is 'normal' where you live and when a significant change in aircraft noise levels occurs that makes you think an incident is out of the ordinary.

How often you complain will depend on where you live and what your own criteria are for 'nuisance' – for example, sleep disturbance, interruption of music, television or conversation.

Do complain responsibly, though. If you complain more than 30 times a month, you'll be put into the 'multiple complainers' category which will undermine the overall noise picture statistics, compromising the opportunity for meaningful action on intrusive noise.

It's also important to keep making reports of noisy incidents – even if you're not satisfied with the airport's reply – in order to help press for long term action.

## What Happens When I Complain?

Contact details for registering your complaint appear on the back page of this leaflet, with other useful contacts. You can write, email or telephone, but our recommendation is that you email via the SSE website so we receive a copy of your complaint to the airport and can follow it up independently on your behalf. Give as much information as you can about the incident so we can make our own assessment and pursue as appropriate.

## Frequently Asked Questions

*What constitutes an infringement?*

This is a complex subject and fuller details are available on the SSE website, but in summary infringements include:

- exceeding defined noise levels measured at fixed points 6.5km from each end of the runway
- aircraft flying too low past these same fixed points

- departing aircraft leaving the 'noise preferential routes' before reaching a height of 4000ft above sea level (3000ft between 11.30pm and 6am in some cases)
- aircraft are also required to avoid flying over Bishop's Stortford and avoid flying over Sawbridgeworth and Stansted Mountfitchet at an altitude of less than 2500 feet.
- unmuffled engine testing between 10pm (9pm on Saturdays and Sundays) and 7am (9am on Sundays)
- other incidents such as very low flying aircraft over built up areas and use of excessive reverse thrust when landing at night

*I've heard that arriving aircraft can't be 'off-track' – is this true?*

Arrivals account for half the operations at Stansted and don't have to keep to a specific 'noise preferential route' so technically can't be off-track. For safety reasons, air traffic controllers can route incoming aircraft wherever they need to, and at whatever altitude is necessary. However, if you are bothered by a particularly noisy aircraft or aircraft that wouldn't normally overfly you, it is still worth registering your concern.

*Can I complain about helicopter noise?*

Yes. Although helicopters do not fly on noise preferential routes, they have rules for set routes and minimum heights and are under the constant guidance of air traffic control. Note that helicopters are requested to avoid flying over Birchanger, Bishop's Stortford and Stansted Mountfitchet.

*What about planes from other airports?*

Stansted Airport can't deal with complaints about aircraft that aren't heading to or from Stansted.

*How can Stop Stansted Expansion help?*

SSE follows up every complaint which is routed through our system and in around 20 percent of cases your complaints yield something useful in terms of our work to press the airport to improve its system of noise and track keeping. We urge you to give as much information when complaining as you can. In addition, if you're not happy with the answer you get from the airport, we will pursue relevant cases with them. You can also contact the Department for Transport if you're unhappy with the airport's response.

*I've complained before and got nowhere  
– why should I carry on?*

Registering your complaint helps show that noise remains a local concern and gives SSE a strong evidence base to address noise issues within the wider context, not least expansion proposals. It also helps build the picture of what is happening so we can press for better practice.

*Can I see flight paths and heights of aircraft and helicopters online?*

Yes, this service is available through Webtrak, although there is a 24-hour delay before you can access the data. See <http://webtrak5.bksv.com/stn>



## **To register a complaint with Stansted Airport about noisy or off-track aircraft or helicopters:**

**ONLINE:** We recommend that you use our online form 'Reporting Noisy Aircraft' linked from the Home Page of our website at [www.stopstanstedexpansion.com](http://www.stopstanstedexpansion.com). This will automatically give us a copy which we can examine and pursue.

**OTHER METHODS:** It is also possible to write direct to the airport's Flight Evaluation Unit c/o Noise Communications Team, Enterprise House, Stansted Airport, Essex CM24 1QW, phone their recorded answering service on 0800 243 788, or email at [stanstednoiseline@stanstedairport.com](mailto:stanstednoiseline@stanstedairport.com), but this does not enable SSE's noise adviser to monitor reports.

## **Not happy or need extra help?**

**CONTACT SSE:** by email, phone or post (see below).

**CONTACT The Department for Transport:** via the online 'contact' form at <https://forms.dft.gov.uk/contact-dft-and-agencies/> or by post to The Aviation Directorate, 1/25, Great Minster House, 33 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 4DR.



Produced by Stop Stansted Expansion  
PO Box 311 Takeley  
Bishop's Stortford, Herts CM22 6PY  
01279 870558  
[info@stopstanstedexpansion.com](mailto:info@stopstanstedexpansion.com)  
[www.stopstanstedexpansion.com](http://www.stopstanstedexpansion.com)