

Low Flying Aircraft Complaints

If you witness a drone or aircraft operation that you believe is currently presenting a danger to you or other persons, or is being used to commit a crime please report it immediately to your local law enforcement first responders. They can protect public safety and can help discourage dangerous or illegal activities.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is the government agency responsible for aviation safety. We welcome information from citizens that will enable us to take corrective measures against individuals violating Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) also known as the Federal Aviation Regulations. It is FAA policy to investigate citizen complaints of low-flying aircraft operated in violation of the regulations that might endanger persons or property.

We will need facts before we conduct an investigation. There are public accessible smart phone software applications (<https://flightaware.com/>, <https://www.flihtadar24.com/>, and others) that may be able to identify aircraft that are overflying you currently. Below is examples of the information we will need to complete an investigation.

- **Photographs** – Photographs, or video is some of the best evidence we can obtain to start our investigation. Even cell phone recordings will assist greatly.
- **Identification** - Can you identify the aircraft? Did you record the registration number which appears on the side of the aircraft or tail? (On U.S. registered civilian aircraft, that number will be preceded with a capital N). Was it a helicopter, or a fixed- wing aircraft? What was the color? Did it have propellers or was it a jet aircraft? Was it a high or low- wing aircraft? Did it appear military or civilian?
- **Time and Place** - Exactly when did the incident(s) occur? Where did this happen? What direction was the aircraft flying?
- **Altitude** – How high (elevation above the surrounding terrain) was the aircraft flying? On what do you base your estimate? Was the aircraft level with or below the elevation of a prominent object such as a tower or building? Did you obtain photographs? Are there witnesses who can confirm your estimate - do you have their names, addresses, and telephone numbers?
- **Supporting Evidence** - Do you know of any other witnesses? The more the better. Do you have their names, addresses? Where may they be contacted? Are local police aware of the problem? While they have limited authority in aviation matters, police officers are considered "trained observers" by the courts and their written statements or reports make excellent evidence should our enforcement action go to trial.

Altitude Regulations

Below is an excerpt from 14 CFR §91.119 of the General Operating and Flight Rules regarding minimum safe altitudes.

Except when necessary for takeoff or landing, no person may operate an aircraft below the following altitudes:

- a) **Anywhere** -An altitude allowing, if a power unit fails, an emergency landing without undue hazard to persons or property on the surface.
- b) **Over congested areas** -Over any congested area of a city, town, or settlement, or over any open-air assembly of persons, an altitude of 1,000 feet above the highest obstacle within a horizontal radius of 2,000 feet of the aircraft.
- c) **Over other than congested areas** - An altitude of 500 feet above the surface except over open water or sparsely populated areas. In that case, the aircraft may not be operated closer than 500 feet to any person, vessel, vehicle, or structure.*
- d) **Helicopters** - Helicopters may be operated at less than the minimums prescribed in paragraph (b) or (c) of this section if the operation is conducted without hazard to persons or property on the surface. In addition, each person operating a helicopter shall comply with routes or altitudes specifically prescribed for helicopters by the Administrator.

Helicopter operations may be conducted below the minimum altitudes set for fixed-wing aircraft. The reason: they have unique operating characteristics, the most important of which is their ability to execute pinpoint emergency landings during power-out emergencies. Furthermore, the helicopter's increased use by law enforcement and emergency medical service agencies requires added flexibility.

Agricultural Aircraft Operations (crop dusting)

Below is an excerpt from 14 CFR §137.49 regarding Agricultural Aircraft Operations.

During the actual dispensing operation, including approaches, departures, and turnarounds reasonably necessary for the operation, an aircraft may be operated over other than congested areas *below* 500 feet above the surface and closer than 500 feet to persons, vessels, vehicles, and structures, if the operations are conducted without creating a hazard to persons or property on the surface.

For further guidance or to file a complaint with the Greater Chicago FSDO, please call (847) 294-8700, or email: 9-AVS-CHI-FSDO-03@faa.gov. For aircraft that are operated outside of the listed regulations, please see the Low Flying Aircraft Information Form on the following page. For complaints which are able to identify a specific aircraft by registration (N-Number), flight number, drone owner/operator, or drone registration, you may also file a FAA Safety Hotline by visiting: <https://hotline.faa.gov/>.

Low Flying Aircraft Information Form

Complete the following form and email to: 9-AVS-CHI-FSDO-03@faa.gov .This form is PDF fillable using Adobe Acrobat®. Go to <https://get.adobe.com/reader/> to download a free version.

Complainant Information

Name	
Address	
Telephone #	
Email	

Identification (Aircraft)

- Do you know the make and model of aircraft? If so please list in box below. Unknown

- Was it military? or civilian or Unknown
- Was it a helicopter? Yes No Unknown
- Was it a drone? Yes No Unknown
 - Did you see a person operating the drone controls? Yes No Unknown
- Was the aircraft performing aerial application of chemicals? (Crop-dusting) Yes No Unknown
- Was it a large airliner small Jet (Corporate) or general aviation small aircraft? Unknown
- Did it have a high wing low-wing or biplane (2 wings stacked one above the other) Unknown
- Did it have a propeller(s)? Yes No Unknown
- How many engines did it have? (If known please fill in the box below) Unknown

- What was the color? (If known please fill in box below). Unknown

- Did you record the registration number which appears on the side of the aircraft or tail (On U.S. registered aircraft, that number will be preceded with a capital "N")? If known please fill in box below. Unknown

Time and Place

- Exactly when did the incident(s) occur (If more than once please list each instance)?

- Where did this happen (Please be specific with complete address if you have it)?

- What direction was the aircraft flying? Unknown

Altitude

- How high (low) was the aircraft flying? unknown

- On what do you base your estimate? I.e. was the aircraft level with or below the elevation of a prominent object such as a tower or building? unknown

Supporting Evidence

- Do you know of any other witnesses? Please list each in box below with their names, addresses, and telephone numbers. unknown

- Are local police aware of the problem? Yes No unknown While they have limited authority in aviation matters, police officers are considered "trained observers" by the courts and their written statements or reports make excellent evidence should our enforcement action go to trial. If you checked yes please list name, address, and telephone number information so that we may contact them.

Any additional information you would like to add to this complaint? None

Aircraft Noise Complaints

For aircraft which are operated within the Federal Aviation Regulations, but are observed as a nuisance due to noise, contact the Great Lakes Regional Administrator's Office Noise Hotline at 847-294-8365 or write an email to 9-agl-noise@faa.gov, and provide the following:

- **Your name** — Your first and last name
- **Street Address or Cross Streets** — Provide the street address or cross streets where the event(s) occurred. The FAA can more accurately research and determine a cause of an event(s) with more accurate details being provided. This information is important not only in determining the initial cause of an event(s), but also to track continual occurrences that can point to a systemic issue. Please enter your home address, if this is not related to a noise complaint.
- **State** — Provide the state name in which the event(s) occurred
- **Zip code** — Provide the zip code in which the event(s) occurred
- **Approximate Start Date and Time of Event** — The times and dates you are experiencing the noise disturbance
- **Description** — Describe the event and the location of the event(s) as best you can
- **The type of aircraft causing the complaint** (i.e., jet, helicopters, propeller, unknown)
- **Aircraft Description** — Provide any additional details to help describe the aircraft to include color, number and placement of large wing(s) (top, middle, bottom of aircraft), and number and placement of engines (tail, body, wing).
- **Airport Source** — Provide the airport name that the aircraft left from or was heading to (if known). This is the airport that you may believe the inquiry is associated with.
- **Repeat Occurrence** — Indicate if this is a repeat occurrence (Yes/No)
- **Officials Contacted to Date** — Indicate whether any additional government officials have been contacted and include their name, office title, and how they were contacted (such as email, letter, or phone).

Other Complaints

- For information regarding drones go to: https://www.faa.gov/uas/contact_us/report_uas_sighting/
- Consumer or airline service-related issues (e.g., ticketing, baggage, or flight delays). These complaints are referred to the Department of Transportation <https://www.transportation.gov/airconsumer/file-consumer-complaint>
- Pets or service animals on passenger flights. Refer to www.faa.gov/travelers/fly_pets/cabin_pets
- Security or screening of passengers, aircraft, cargo, airport, tarmac, or ramp operations. These complaints are specifically referred to Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Customer Service at www.tsa.gov/contact/customer-service
- Laser incidents. Refer to www.faa.gov/aircraft/safety/report/laserinfo
- Bird or wildlife strikes. Refer to <https://wildlife.faa.gov/home>
- Condensation trails in the sky. Refer to https://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/apl/noise_emissions/contrails/.