

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Policy on Addressing Aircraft Noise Complaints and Inquiries from the Public (last updated 12/04/2019)

I. Introduction

In general, aircraft noise is a shared responsibility between airport authorities (hereinafter referred to as sponsors), airlines, state and local government, communities, and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).¹ This document presents the FAA's policy on addressing aircraft noise complaints and inquiries from the public and describes elements of an initiative to improve the agency's noise complaint process. The initiative includes a cooperative effort with partnering airport sponsors to improve coordination in responding to noise complaints and inquiries, thereby reducing uncertainty, increasing consistency, and better serving the public. The FAA does not use noise complaints, including the volume of noise complaints, to justify the need to alter current practices or alter existing procedures and routes.

2 Policy

As a matter of policy, the FAA seeks to efficiently and effectively respond to and address aircraft noise complaints and inquiries from the public in a clear, consistent, and repeatable manner that is responsive and applies the best use of FAA resources. In furtherance of this policy, the FAA is implementing an initiative to improve its noise complaint process. Elements of the initiative include:

- a. Establishing regional FAA aircraft noise websites that address regional aircraft noise and community-related issues. The websites will also include information and links on where and how the public can submit aircraft noise complaints or inquiries.
- b. Identifying specific information complaints and inquiries must contain for the FAA to understand the source, location, and nature of the noise issue, thereby improving the FAA's ability to respond effectively and efficiently.
- c. Utilizing a digital platform (e.g., FAA Noise Complaint and Inquiry System or FAA Noise Portal) to consistently record and track noise complaints and inquiries the FAA receives from the public.
- d. Posting, at least annually, summaries of the numbers and types of noise complaints and inquiries FAA received by FAA region, on regional and national FAA websites. Information will be void of personally identifiable information (PII) such as names, email addresses, postal addresses, phones numbers, etc.
- e. Utilizing the FAA Noise Ombudsman to address noise complaints and inquiries that are not resolved at the FAA Regional level per the decision of the FAA Regional Administrators' Office.
- f. Accepting and registering noise complaints and inquiries containing the necessary information that are submitted through the FAA Noise Portal, by postal mail, or by voice message, as described on the FAA's regional and national aircraft noise websites.
- g. Not accepting or registering noise complaints or inquiries from third party automated applications or devices. The use of these applications can lead to automated generation of high volumes of repeat complaints and inquiries, responding to which is inconsistent with the FAA's policy of applying the best use of its resources.

¹ See U.S. Department of Transportation, *Aviation Noise Abatement Policy* (November 18, 1976), available at [https://www.faa.gov/regulations_policies/policy_guidance/envir_policy/media/FAA1976NoisePolicy.pdf].

- h. Providing timely responses to aircraft noise complaints and inquiries.
- i. Not responding to the same general complaint or inquiry from the same individual more than once. The “same general complaint or inquiry” is one that does not differ in general principal from a previous complaint, and that would generate the same FAA response.
- j. Requiring the public to check a required field (yes or no) in the Noise Portal to indicate whether they want to receive a response from the FAA.
- k. Not responding to complaints or inquiries that are of an abusive or threatening nature or contain obscene language (condemning and offensive nature exhibiting no clear desire for a response). As appropriate, such complaints or inquiries may be referred to appropriate security and/or law enforcement authorities.
- l. Posting, and updating as necessary, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and answers on the FAA regional and national aircraft noise websites to inform and educate the public.
- m. Facilitating the public’s understanding of the relevant aircraft noise-related issues when responding to noise complaints and inquiries by providing, in plain and clear language, appropriate information about relevant FAA regulations, policies, and guidance; measures to address the aircraft noise of concern; and circumstances that could lead to implementation of additional measures.
- n. Coordinating with partnering airport sponsors to share applicable noise complaint/inquiry data and identify on the regional aircraft noise websites the operator’s points of contact for public noise complaints and inquiries.
- o. Requiring inquiries requesting changes in FAA operations or procedures for noise purposes in the vicinity of an airport to be submitted to the airport sponsor and airport-sanctioned community roundtable (if one exists).
- p. Striving for consistency and avoiding duplication with airport sponsor responses to aircraft noise complaints or inquiries.
- q. Continually monitoring and improving the FAA’s overall performance in an efficient and effective manner.

3. Policy Review

The FAA will periodically review and update this policy as appropriate.