

Probably one of the most emotive pollution issues of the present day, with many councils highlighting the anti-social problems caused by noisy neighbours. So what controls are in force when that neighbour is an airport?

Who is responsible for noise control at Gatwick?

Airports in the UK are divided into two categories - non-designated and designated. At non-designated airports the responsibility for noise control is left to the airport owner, whilst at designated airports control is exercised by the Department for Transport (DfT).

Under Section 78 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982, Gatwick (along with Heathrow and Stansted) is a designated airport, and measures such as departure noise limits and night flying policy are formulated by the DfT.

BAA Gatwick is responsible for the control of **ground noise** within the airport boundary and for the implementation and monitoring of the measures specified by the DfT.

How is aircraft noise measured?

The noise of **departing** aircraft (there are currently no limits governing arrivals) is measured by permanent noise monitors located approximately 6.5 kilometres from the aircraft start of roll position at either end of Gatwick's main runway. There are three at the western end on Russ Hill and two at the eastern end in the village of Burstow.

Data from the monitors is downloaded automatically each night to the monitoring systems in the Flight Evaluation Unit at Gatwick, where it is matched to the aircraft tracks.

I live under a flightpath and it is deafening - why only measure noise at fixed points?

The DfT is responsible for setting departure limits and monitor positions. The airport is only required to measure departure noise at the fixed monitors. An aircraft is deemed to be at its noisiest on departure at these points.

Prior to going into operation, aircraft prototypes are noise certificated to International Civil Aviation Organisation standards, this body being an agency of the United Nations. The 6.5 kilometre distance is used in the certification process.

To gauge noise levels experienced by communities around the airport, noise exposure contours for each summer season are produced showing gradients of noise levels down to what is scientifically acknowledged as 'the onset of annoyance'.

This does not mean that all those living outside the contours will not be annoyed, or that all those living within them will be. But they do show how the noise climate is changing as airlines gradually replace their fleets with modern quieter aircraft.

A map showing the comparison between the **2001** and **2002** contours is attached to this sheet.



What are the noise limits at the fixed monitors?

The daytime (**07:00 - 22:59**) noise limit is **94dBA** and the night time (**23:30 - 05:59**) limit is **87dBA**. Between **06:00** and **06:59** and **23:00** and **23:29** there are 'shoulder periods' when the limit is **89dBA** (all timings are local time).

As it is impossible to locate all the monitors at exactly 6.5 kilometres or at the same height, a small adjustment is made to ensure that the limit is applied consistently across them all.

The manufacturer's specification also guarantees that any equipment deviation will be within **+/- 0.7 dBA**, so an adjustment of **+0.7** decibels is applied to any reading from these sites.

What happens when an aircraft exceeds these limits?

A financial surcharge is requested from the airline, depending upon the level by which the day or night time limits are exceeded.

The surcharges for exceeding the following decibel readings (which include the adjustments mentioned on the front page) are :

Westerly operations

Day time

Site 1 99.8-102.7 £500
 102.8+ £1000

Sites 3 and 5

96.7-99.6 £500
 99.7+ £1000

Shoulder period

Site 1 94.8-97.7 £500
 97.8+ £1000

Sites 3 and 5

91.7-94.6 £500
 94.7+ £1000

Night time

Site 1 92.8-95.7 £500
 95.8+ £1000

Sites 3 and 5

89.7-92.6 £500
 92.7+ £1000



Easterly operations

Daytime

Site 4 94.8-97.7 £500
 97.8+ £1000

Site 6 94.6-97.5 £500
 97.6+ £1000

Shoulder period

Site 4 89.8-92.7 £500
 92.8+ £1000

Site 6 89.6-92.5 £500
 92.6+ £1000

Night time

Site 4 87.8-90.7 £500
 90.8+ £1000

Site 6 87.6-90.5 £500
 90.6+ £1000

More profit for BAA - what do you spend the money on?

BAA Gatwick does not profit from the charges imposed. Originally all monies were distributed annually to local community, environmental and school projects through the Community and Environmental Grants Scheme. Since **1997** over **£300,000** was distributed to nearly **400** groups.

In January 2000 a **Community Trust Fund** was launched and is managed **independently** of BAA Gatwick by nine Trustees. Grants are given annually to a wide range of community projects in areas affected by the airport operations.

In **2002/03** the Trust approved **254** grants to help the young, the disabled and the elderly, the disadvantaged, schools, arts, cultural and sports projects, environmental and conservation schemes.

An annual contribution of **£100,000** (index linked) will be made to the fund over the period ending **31 March 2009**. The revenue raised from the surcharges for noise infringements has been added to this since January 2000.

What action is being taken to reduce noise?

In **2001** the DfT lowered the day and night time noise limits from **97dBA** and **89dBA** respectively to their current levels. During **2001/02** there were **122,996** departures and **64** infringements. This equates to a **67%** reduction in the number of infringements in **1997/98** when the noise limits were higher. In **2002/03** the number of infringements fell from **64** to **8**.

For some years the phase out of what are known as Chapter 2 aircraft (older types such as the Boeing 707, DC8 and BAC1-11) was ongoing. Under an International Agreement Chapter 2 aircraft have not been permitted to fly in UK airspace since **31 March 2002**.

Now, one of BAA Gatwick's objectives is to reduce the number of Chapter 3 "high" aircraft (those which only just qualify for the most stringent international noise classification) to less than **1%** of total aircraft movements by March 2005.

In 2002/03 less than **2%** of movements at Gatwick were by Chapter 3 "high" types. In addition, from **April 2003** BAA Gatwick differentiated its landing charges according to the certificated noise levels of individual aircraft and applied a **50%** surcharge to those categorised as Chapter 3 "high".