

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Aircraft Operations and Noise at CLE

1. Why are planes flying over this area, we're not under a flight path?

The FAA (Air Traffic Control (ATC)), not the City of Cleveland, has sole authority and responsibility for routing and separating aircraft throughout the national airspace system. ATC's first priority is always the safe and efficient separation and routing of aircraft throughout the national airspace system.

The Cleveland region experiences many types of aircraft over flights that may or may not be related to CLE. In the CLE airspace, at any point in time, there could be long haul flights en route (e.g. from Los Angeles to Chicago) traveling at very high altitudes; general aviation aircraft traveling to and from other local airports, military aircraft, other commercial aircraft traveling to nearby commercial airports and helicopter traffic for medical or traffic reasons.

If you live anywhere within the Cleveland metropolitan area, you will likely experience aircraft over flights. How and to what frequency depends on the weather, the runways being used, the type of aircraft, aircraft engine characteristics and relative distance from the airport.

2. Who tells the pilots where and when to turn?

Commercial pilots fly designated routes to and from CLE as instructed by FAA air traffic controllers. The FAA is responsible for managing Cleveland's airspace and for ensuring the safe and expeditious flow of traffic.

3. What is the City of Cleveland, Department of Port Control responsible for?

The Department of Port Control is responsible for operating and maintaining Airport facilities and for ensuring runways (and taxiways) are in good working conditions, and ensure FAA regulations are met.

4. How does weather impact traffic operations and noise?

When Cleveland experiences pleasant and temperate springs and autumns, and neither air conditioners nor heaters are being operated, many citizens opt to leave windows and doors ajar. These actions, allow aircraft, vehicle traffic, and other exterior noise to permeate deeper into the home, hence increasing awareness of noise and its associated annoyance.

A greater number of noise complaints are received in the spring and autumn when people are outside and windows are open.

In addition, during warm temperatures, the air density (air molecules per cubic foot) decreases significantly, thereby reducing aircraft performance and lift. (Aircraft performance is dependent upon the number of molecules in the atmosphere. The fewer number of air molecules, the lesser the engine and airframe performance.) Consequently air density decreases as airport altitude increases.

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Aircraft noise is also more noticeable on cloudy days. Low ceiling cloud cover tends to reflect or reverberate.

5. I was awakened last night by a series of aircraft; doesn't CLE close down at night?

CLE operates 24 hours per day 365 days per year; however CLE has implemented night time procedures to help minimize night time impact. See CLE's most recent Part 150 Record of Approval.

6. Is there a minimum altitude requirement for aircraft flying over residential areas and school yards?

Airport managers and the Federal Aviation Administration would prefer that aircraft did not fly over populated areas. The FAA and Airline's policy is to get CLE commercial flights high.

Local and State authorities do not have jurisdiction over airspace regulations and, therefore, cannot mandate that aircraft and/or helicopters fly at higher altitudes.>

Aircraft operating under visual flight rules outside or beneath the Tower's airspace are not required to use air traffic's services and fly unrestricted. A pilot can freely select his or her route and altitude with no restrictions other than those flight rules establishing minimum altitudes for flights over populated areas and required separation distances from clouds and terrain. The Federal Aviation Regulation (FAR) Part 91.119 indicates that, except when necessary for departure or landing, the minimum altitude over urban areas is 1,000 feet above ground level (AGL) and 500 feet AGL over rural areas.

7. How is runway use determined at CLE?

Runway use is determined by variables such as weather, capacity, airport layout, aircraft performance, noise abatement procedures and aircraft density in the surrounding airspace. When wind conditions allow, traffic density and arrival/departure streams determine the runway use at the airport to ensure the most expeditious and safe flow of air traffic.

Each morning at CLE, ATC sets the airport's flow for the day, based on the prevailing winds. Due to the complexities of re-routing aircraft to alternative runway ends, the flow is not changed unless wind conditions require it.

8. Why do some aircraft seem louder than others?

Aircraft operating at CLE have a diverse range of noise levels. These noise levels primarily depend on the type of engine used by the aircraft, the size of the aircraft and whether the aircraft is taxiing on the airfield, landing or taking off. Current versions of Stage 3 aircraft tend to be the quietest aircraft in the fleet. Older Aircraft with Stage 3 "hush kitted" engines tend to be the loudest. Departures tend to be louder than arrivals since the pilot is using more power to the engine to achieve lift.