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# MSP NOISE NEWS

A quarterly publication of the Metropolitan Airports Commission - Aviation Noise and Satellite Programs

## Upgrade Will Provide Enhancements to Noise Monitoring System

By early next year residents, city leaders and Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) staff will all have the ability to track flights and view noise levels of those flights into and out of the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP) after only 24 hours of the flight occurring. Shortly thereafter, the ability to view near real-time flight information will be available.

That's good news to anyone who has called the airport's noise complaint line, logged on to [macnoise.com](http://macnoise.com) or spoken with MAC staff about noise disturbances.

While MSP flight information (time, flight track location, noise levels, etc.) has been available on the Internet for more than 10 years, the MAC has not been able to post the data for several days after a flight occurred.

That's because since 1992, when the Noise and Operations Monitoring System (NOMS) was installed, the MAC has received its flight data, excluding noise levels, from the local Federal Aviation Administration Air Traffic Control Tower.

Currently the FAA holds the data for three days before releasing it to the MAC. Then MAC needs time

to process the data so that it can be viewed online. Typically this results in a five-day delay.

Now, however, with the system due for an upgrade, the MAC has plans to obtain flight information independently through a multilateration flight tracking (MFT) system.

When operational, the MFT will provide, directly to the MAC, complete flight tracking, noise data and the details of each flight (airline, aircraft type, flight number, etc.). Flight tracking and position information will be available in near real-time, while flight details will be available within one day.

"A MFT system uses remote sensors that continually scan the airspace for signals from both aircraft transponders and collision avoidance systems," explains Chad Leqve, manager of the MAC's aviation noise programs. "The captured information is then used to triangulate an aircraft's exact position."

The system will also provide even more accurate data, better airspace coverage, and improved reliability.

"Because the sensors are strategically placed throughout the Twin Cities area to maximize coverage, the multilateration

system is expected to provide an upgrade to the flight tracking and reporting capabilities at MSP, as well as at some of MAC's Reliever Airports," said Leqve.

Along with providing the ability to track flights in near real-time, a multilateration system offers both a stable platform for future acquisition of flight track information and substantial analysis benefits.

Over the years the system has provided an invaluable analytical tool for both the MAC and surrounding communities.

As a central element of the MAC's noise and airspace analysis program, used extensively for analyzing and reporting aircraft operations and noise levels at MSP, the system is and will continue to be one of the most sophisticated and comprehensive aviation noise monitoring systems in the world.

The new system should be in place by early 2009 with near real-time data available shortly thereafter. ♦

## NOC News



The MSP Noise Oversight Committee met March 19 and discussed the following items:

### Flight Track Data Acquisition System Upgrade

See page 1 for more information.

### Pilot Communication Program

See page 3 for more information.

### Annual Noise Exposure Report

As part of an agreement with noise impacted cities surrounding the Minneapolis—St. Paul International Airport, the MAC is required, by March 1 of each year, to prepare a

noise exposure contour that reflects actual noise conditions at MSP for the prior calendar year.

Using actual data from 2007, the MAC completed this report and briefed the Committee at its March meeting. The primary reason for the differences between the *projected 2007* noise contour and the *actual 2007* noise contour was how the runways at MSP were being used.

While use of Runway 17 for departures in 2007 increased significantly over 2006, departures continue to track below the forecasted percentage, as do departures off Runway 12R. In contrast, departures off Runway 12L are higher than were forecasted.

To learn more, go to: [www.macnoise.com/resources/library/](http://www.macnoise.com/resources/library/) and then click on **2007 MSP Annual Noise Contour Report**.

### Next Meeting

The next NOC meeting will be held **Wednesday, May 21 at 1:30 p.m.** at the MAC General Offices.

For more information, call **612-725-6455** or visit <http://www.macnoise.com/noc>.

### NOC Meeting Materials

Meeting materials (agendas, minutes, memos and presentations) can be accessed on the MAC website at <http://www.mspairport.com/mac/meetings/noc.aspx>, or call **612-725-6455**. ♦

## Ask the Expert

### Q. What Happens when I call the airport noise complaint line?

**A.** The Metropolitan Airports Commission maintains a noise complaint and information line 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Residents can call this number (612-726-9411) to file noise complaints about specific operations for MSP, or any of the MAC Reliever Airports, and to request a return call. During business hours (8:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday) residents can select option # 2 to speak with a staff member, if available. If staff is unavailable at that time, residents are encouraged to leave a message for a return call. Calls are typically returned within three business days.

People often ask whether filing noise complaints will change how the airport operates. Unfortunately, it is not that simple. On a daily basis, operational factors such as wind and weather, the number of arrivals and departures, the time of day, construction activity, and other conditions all play a part in how the airport operates at any given time.

**The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has sole authority for determining where aircraft will fly.** These decisions are made solely upon standard air traffic control procedures (including several noise abatement procedures). Noise complaints are not considered when making these decisions. Noise complaints are, however, used in conjunction with operational data to corroborate specific events or to identify possible trends. Various cities also use the complaints to gauge and assess the level of concern about airport noise in their communities. In addition, the MSP Noise Oversight Committee reviews the complaint data on a monthly basis and uses them in conjunction with historical information, flight track data and noise data to discuss noise issues at MSP and to bring policy recommendations to the MAC. ♦



## Communication Program Aims to Reduce Gear Extension Noise

After several months of information gathering and discussion, the MSP Noise Oversight Committee (NOC) and the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC), in cooperation with the airlines at MSP, have implemented a pilot communication program aimed at educating pilots on how they can help minimize noise on the ground associated with landing gear extension.

Many residents living under an approach path know that additional noise is created when an aircraft's landing gear is extended, due to increased drag and the disruption of airflow along an aircraft's surface.

Certainly this has been the experience of people living under approach paths for runways at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP). Apple Valley residents have been particularly

concerned with aircraft on approach to Runway 35 flying over the city with landing gear down.

While pilots often wait to extend their landing gear until absolutely necessary (to save on fuel and reduce noise impacts), typically this happens at approximately 7 to 8 miles from an airport, but no later than 5 to 6 miles out.



Because airports cannot mandate the point at which pilots extend an aircraft's landing gear, the MAC and the NOC instead worked with the airlines to develop a pilot awareness

plan.

The plan included adding information to the [macnoise.com](http://macnoise.com) pilot information page both describing the issue and requesting pilots do their best to avoid extended periods of flight with gear extended.

Northwest Airlines then created a link from its internal flight operations website to the MAC's pilot information page and sent a notice from its Chief Pilots office to all NWA pilots describing the issue, directing them to the pilot information page, and requesting they do their best to avoid extended periods of flight with gear extended.

The MAC sent a letter to all MSP airline representatives requesting the same. Both the airlines and the pilots have been very receptive. ♦

## Carriers Pledge to Help Minimize Ground Noise on Airport's West Side

Last summer, in response to resident inquiries and complaints, the City of Richfield asked the MSP Noise Oversight Committee (NOC) to discuss their concerns about aircraft activity taking place on the west side of the airport across Hwy. 77.

Since then, the MAC has worked with the NOC, the City of Richfield and the airlines operating in that area to determine whether daily cargo facility operations, aircraft activity on the airport's cargo ramp or aircraft engine start procedures were creating a noise impact for east Richfield residents.

MAC staff met several times with representatives of companies that

operate out of the cargo facilities to discuss residents' noise concerns and to develop solutions to minimize, to the greatest degree possible, noise created by aircraft starting their engines on the ramp and then taxiing to adjacent taxiways.

This led to the adoption of an "engine start procedure" that requires aircraft be towed to the east side of the cargo ramp area (further away from residential areas) before starting their engines.

To ensure compliance, the MAC sent a Letter of Agreement (LOA) to the companies that conduct aircraft start operations on that ramp.

The LOA outlines the procedure in detail and requires operators to notify the MAC if they observe anyone not complying with the procedure.

The MAC is pleased that all of the operators have signed and returned the LOA.

"Sometimes people wonder whether [the NOC] can have an impact ... I think we've done some really great things over there on the west side," said Bill Kilian, Richfield City Councilman and MSP Noise Oversight Committee member. "...the airport and everybody [on the NOC] is to be commended for the progress we've made." ♦



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### Public Input Meeting Scheduled for July 29

Please join Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) staff at the next Airport Noise Public Input Meeting on **Tuesday, July 29, 2008** at 7 p.m.

The meeting will be held at the Eagan Municipal Center located at **3830 Pilot Knob Road** in Eagan. This is an opportunity for residents to ask questions and learn more about what's new at MSP in terms of airport noise.

For more information, please contact Christene Sirois at **612-725-6455** or **[Christene.Sirois@mspmac.org](mailto:Christene.Sirois@mspmac.org)**. ♦

If you no longer wish to receive this publication, and other airport noise related information, please call or e-mail Christene Sirois at 612-725-6455 or [csiros@mspmac.org](mailto:csiros@mspmac.org). In your e-mail, please write the word "delete" in the subject line, followed by your street address and city.