Noisiest Aircraft Operations at All-time Low

In April 2012, only eight operations were flown by Modified Stage 3 aircraft, the noisiest types of airplanes operating at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP).

In April 2011, there were 855 such operations and in April 2010 2,424, a dramatic dip in only two years.

Each month, the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) publishes reports summarizing each aircraft type’s activity at MSP. The Technical Advisor’s Report shows a steady decrease (from 58,000 in 2007 to 7,900 in 2011) in the number of operations flown by Modified Stage 3 aircraft. That’s an 86 percent decrease. (See graph.)

The all-time low in April this year was preceded by 19 operations in March, 203 in February and 261 in January.

Aircraft models that fit into the Modified Stage 3 category include the retrofitted Boeing 737-200 and 727, and the McDonnell Douglas DC9.

Airlines typically make changes to their fleets to accommodate changing market needs and to reduce operating costs.

Modified Stage 3 aircraft are relatively older aircraft and less fuel-efficient than newer aircraft. Many of these older aircraft were built in the 1970s and retrofitted to meet the noise-reduction requirements of the Airport Noise and Capacity Act of 1990 (ANCA).

ANCA required commercial air carrier aircraft weighing more than 75,000 pounds to meet more stringent (Stage 3) noise criteria as defined by the Federal Aviation Administration by no later than January 1, 2000.

The benefit of having fewer Modified Stage 3 aircraft operating at MSP is significant. As a comparison, it takes 43 operations by a single CRJ aircraft, which are manufactured to meet Stage 3 criteria, to equal the noise output of only one DC9.

It is anticipated that the number of Modified Stage 3 operations will continue to decline, as these aging aircraft types are costly to maintain in a highly-competitive industry.

The MAC will continue to monitor this trend as older aircraft types are replaced.

To view monthly operations reports, please visit www.macnoise.com/tools-reports/monthly-operations-reports.

As the number of older (Modified Stage 3) aircraft operating at MSP has declined, the number of newer, Regional jets has increased.
The MSP Noise Oversight Committee (NOC) met May 16 in the City of Richfield and discussed the following topics:

**Consideration of South Minneapolis Noise Monitoring Request**

NOC members considered a request by residents of South Minneapolis for a temporary deployment of a mobile noise monitor. The request was in response to concerns that the present array of permanent remote monitoring towers does not accurately capture the level of aircraft noise being experienced in certain areas.

Before making a decision, NOC members directed MAC staff to develop criteria for and to assess the benefits of deploying mobile monitoring equipment. The request will be taken up again at the July NOC meeting.

**Monthly Operations Data**

NOC members received a briefing on the monthly Technical Advisor’s Report, Runway 17 Departure Analysis, Crossing-in-the-Corridor Analysis, and the Eagan Mendota Heights Corridor Reports. Find these reports on the Noise Program Office website: www.macnoise.com/tools-reports/monthly-operations-reports.

**Second Quarter Public Input Meeting Comments**

This year’s second quarterly public input meeting was held April 24. At the NOC meeting, members received a briefing about public comments shared at the meeting. The next quarterly public input meeting is scheduled for July 24, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. at the Metropolitan Airports Commission General Offices, 6040 28th Ave. South, Minneapolis. For more information call 612-726-8100.

**Next NOC Meeting**

The next MSP NOC meeting is scheduled for July 11, 2012 at 1:30 p.m. at the Metropolitan Airports Commission General Offices, 6040 28th Ave. South, Minneapolis. For more information call 612-726-8100.

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**NOC News**

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**Q. How are aircraft noise level data collected and used?**

**A.**

Noise levels are continuously measured at 39 noise monitoring sites located within communities surrounding Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport.

At each site, Remote Monitoring Towers, equipped with certified acoustical equipment, measure and store sound level data in compliance with Federal Aviation Administration regulations (14 CFR Part 150).

Every day, Metropolitan Airports Commission staff review the data and match noise events over a certain decibel level with the aircraft causing those events.

All this information is then reported and published online. Find it by downloading the monthly Technical Advisor’s Report or by using the Reports on the Fly feature to create specialized reports. An annual summary is also available by downloading the Annual Noise Contour Report.

To access published reports, visit www.macnoise.com/reports.
Supporting Minneapolis for Modified Departure Procedures

In a letter to the Federal Aviation Administration, dated April 23, the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC), along with the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport Noise Oversight Committee (NOC), indicated its support of the City of Minneapolis’ proposal to modify the headings aircraft fly when departing to the north off Runway 30R at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP).

The letter was mailed after the MAC board unanimously endorsed a request from the NOC for the MAC to send a letter supporting the City’s proposal.

The proposal would move approximately 32 daily departures from a 360-degree to a 340-degree heading (for flights headed to destinations like Duluth, Winnipeg and International Falls); implement use of three divergent headings (360-, 340- and 320-degree) for northbound flights; and continue adherence to the Runway Use System at all times, weather and traffic levels permitting.

Mendota Heights Residents Question Corridor Compliance

Concerns expressed by City of Mendota Heights residents regarding compliance with the Eagan-Mendota Heights Corridor (Corridor) noise abatement procedures have gained the attention of the Federal Aviation Administration at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP).

The goal of the Corridor procedures is to concentrate southeast-bound jet departures, off Runways 12L and 12R, as much as possible within the industrial areas of Eagan and Mendota Heights.

Generally, an average of 95.5 percent of jet aircraft stay within the boundaries. In May 2012, 93.4 percent of air carrier jets stayed within the Corridor.

Recently Mendota Heights residents expressed concern that departures from Runway 12L (northern most runway) were crossing the Corridor’s northern boundary too often.

Air Traffic Control (ATC) normally assigns headings to aircraft departing Runway 12L and 12R that keep them within the Corridor boundaries.

At times, aircraft assigned headings near the northern edge of the Corridor may drift across the boundary due to strong south or south-westerly winds as they gain altitude. Unless adjustments are made, these winds may cause aircraft to turn more tightly or be pushed across the boundary. When this occurs ATC typically adjusts the headings of subsequent aircraft to guide them back into the Corridor.

ATC works to ensure the greatest degree of Corridor effectiveness. However, when privately-operated or propeller-driven aircraft fly outside the Corridor, the procedures may not be applied to maximize operational efficiency. Additionally, there are times when Corridor procedures cannot be used, including during adverse weather conditions.

To learn more, check out the monthly Eagan-Mendota Heights Departure Corridor Analysis, available at www.macnoise.com/tools-reports/monthly-operations-reports.
MSP NOISE NEWS

Inside this issue:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Noisiest Aircraft Operations at All-time Low</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOC News</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask the Expert</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Mendota Heights for Modified Departure Procedures</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mendota Heights Residents Question Corridor Compliance</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sign up today for MSP Noise News updates!

In January 2013, the Metropolitan Airports Commission will begin providing updates about noise issues at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport exclusively online at www.macnoise.com. Hard copies of the Noise News newsletter will not be mailed after January 2013.

Readers who wish to continue to receive news updates should register on the website at https://www.macnoise.com/user/register and subscribe to All News Content.

Readers who do not wish to register can still get the most recent news at www.macnoise.com or by subscribing to the RSS feed.

To start receiving electronic news notifications right away, please sign up online at https://www.macnoise.com/user/register.

If you have questions about the transition, please call 612-726-9411.