

# Night flights



## What is the issue?

Noise created by aircraft at night may cause more disturbance to some people because there is less background noise from other sources and the majority of people will be trying to sleep. Similarly, night noise may appear worse in the summer because people tend to sleep with windows open more frequently.

## Is there a ban on night flights?

Heathrow has always been a 24 hour operation airport. There is not, and never has been, a night ban. However, for the reasons above and in order to try to balance the interests of the local communities and those of the airports users, there are restrictions and rules regarding night flights.

## Who makes the restrictions?

The Department for Transport (DfT) is responsible for making the restrictions on the types of aircraft that can be scheduled to fly at night. In setting the restrictions the aim has been to maintain a balance between the need to protect local communities from too much aircraft noise at night and the operation of services where they provide economic benefits.

BAA does not set the rules but strictly monitors compliance with all Government restrictions in force, reporting regularly to the DfT and the Heathrow Airport Consultative Committee (HACC). This is an independent consultative forum made up of representatives of local authorities, councillors, business and airlines and the DfT.

## What are the restrictions?

Aeroplanes are certified by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) according to the noise they produce. They are classified separately for both take off and landing.

The night flying restrictions are divided into summer and winter seasons. They consist of a movements limit and a quota count system. This means that points are allocated to different aircraft types according to how noisy they are. The noisier the aircraft type, the higher the points allocated. This provides an incentive for airlines to use quieter aircraft types.

## Night period and Night Quota period

The 'night period' is 23:00 to 07:00 hours local during which period the noisiest types of aircraft (classified QC/8 and QC/16) may not be scheduled to land or take-off.

The 'night quota period' is from 23:30 to 06:00 hours local, during which period aircraft movements are restricted by a limit on the number of movements with noise quotas as an additional measure. These number of movements and quota counts allowed are set for each season.

## The Quota count system

Aircraft are given quota count (QC) classifications as follows:

Certified noise level (EPNdB)	Quota count
More than 101.9	QC / 16
99 – 101.9	QC / 08
96 – 98.9	QC / 04
93 – 95.9	QC / 02
90 – 92.9	QC / 01
87 – 89.9	QC / 0.5
84 – 86.9	QC / 0.25

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## What about the aircraft quieter than 84 EPNdB?

Aircraft are exempt from the movements limits and noise quotas if their noise certification data are less than 84 EPNdB. That is, the very quietest aircraft are not subject to movement and quota limits.

## Movements limits and noise quotas at Heathrow

The movement limits and noise quotas for current and future years / seasons are:

Winter							
	2005 / 06	2006 / 07	2007 / 08	2008 / 09	2009 / 10	2010 / 11	2011 / 12
Movement Limit	2550	2550	2550	2550	2550	2550	2550
Noise Quota	4140	4140	4140	4140	4140	4140	4080

Summer							
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Movement Limit	3250	3250	3250	3250	3250	3250	3250
Noise Quota	5610	5610	5460	5460	5340	5220	5100

The summer season is the period of British Summer Time in any one year. The winter season is the period between the end of British Summer Time in one year and the start of British Summer Time in the next.

## End of season flexibility

Left over movements - Up to 10% of the current season's movements limit may be carried over if sufficient amount of the limit has not been used.

Overrun of movements - Also, up to 10% of the next season's movements limit may be anticipated in the event of an overrun. Any excess overrun is penalised in the following season at double the amount of the excess.

The same arrangements apply to the noise quotas.

## What is not allowed?

- (1) Any aircraft which has a quota count of four, eight, or 16 may not be scheduled to take off or land between 23:30 and 06:00 hours local
- (2) Any aircraft which has a quota count of eight or 16 (i.e. the noisiest) may not be scheduled to take off or land between 23:00 and 07:00 hours local
- (3) Any aircraft which has a quota count of eight or 16 may not take off between 23:00 and 07:00 hours local. However, between 23:00 and 23:30 hours local, it may take off if:
  - (a) It was scheduled to take off before 23:00 hours local
  - (b) The take-off was delayed for reasons beyond the control of the aircraft operator; and
  - (c) The airport authority has not given notice to the aircraft operator precluding take-off.

## Dispensations

The Secretary of State has the power to state circumstances in which movements may be disregarded from the night restrictions. This is in exceptional circumstances only.

## How is compliance to the restrictions monitored?

Night flights are closely monitored by BAA on a daily basis. We provide the HACC and the DfT, with regular reports on the use of the movements limits and the noise quotas, details of any dispensations or exemptions granted and reports on any movements by QC/8 and QC/16 aircraft during the night period.

All dispensations granted by the airport have to be reported to the DfT in writing within a maximum of one week from when the flight took place.

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## Our other factsheets

Please see out other fact sheets which provide information on:

- Arrivals
- Departures
- Go arounds
- Aircraft stacks
- Aircraft noise on the ground
- Heathrow and helicopters
- The legal overview.

## Further information

If you would like further information, please contact the Flight Evaluation Unit:

By telephone: 0800 344 844

By e-mail: [noise\\_complaints@baa.com](mailto:noise_complaints@baa.com)

By post: Flight Evaluation Unit  
Second Floor Meridian  
The Compass Centre  
Nelson Road  
London Heathrow Airport  
Hounslow  
TW6 2GW

Website: Make an enquiry on our website:  
[www.heathrow.com/noise](http://www.heathrow.com/noise)

Please note that the freephone telephone number is an answerphone. Please leave you name, contact details and brief details of your enquiry. A member of the FEU will contact you as soon as possible.