

Question & Answer con't

Q: How low can aircraft fly?

A: According to Federal Aviation Regulation Section 91.119: **Except when necessary for takeoff or landing**, no person may operate an aircraft below the following altitudes:

- a) Anywhere. An altitude allowing, if a power unit fails, an emergency landing without undue hazard to persons or property on the surface.
- b) Over congested areas. Over any congested area of a city, town, or settlement, or over any open air assembly of persons, an altitude of 1,000 feet above the highest obstacle within a horizontal radius of 2,000 feet of the aircraft.
- c) Over other than congested areas. An altitude of 500 feet above the surface, except over open water or sparsely populated areas. In those cases, the aircraft may not be operated closer than 500 feet to any person, vessel, vehicle, or structure.
- d) Helicopters. Helicopters may be operated at less than the minimums prescribed in paragraph (b) or (c) of this section if the operation is conducted without hazard to persons or property on the surface. In addition, each person operating a helicopter shall comply with any routes or altitudes specifically prescribed for helicopters by the Administrator.

Q: Why can't Contra Costa County Airport staff always identify each aircraft that disturbs me?

A: Without the aircraft identification number, staff must try to recreate the situation that occurred during the time of the complaint. We do this by listening to the all Buchanan Field Airport radio recordings, and/or contact with FAA Air Traffic Control Tower personnel. We then decipher the information collected to figure out which aircraft that were on frequency were in the vicinity of the caller's home or business. We are typically able to narrow it down to a specific aircraft; however, it is not always an exact science.

Q: What does it mean when an aircraft is "outside Buchanan Field Airport's control area"?

A: Buchanan Field Airport Air Traffic Control Tower has a three-mile control area that encircles the airfield, also known as Class D airspace. (The airport is the center of the circle that has a three-mile radius.) While the Air Traffic Control Tower is in operation, 7:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m., seven days a week, all aircraft must establish communications with the tower prior to entry into and departure from the Class D airspace. Thereafter, communication must be maintained at all times while inside the Class D airspace. When the tower is closed, Buchanan Field Airport's three-mile control area reverts to Class E airspace. Aircraft have no specific requirements for communication into and out of Class E airspace during that time. If an aircraft is flying outside the three-mile control area, it is unlikely that Airport staff will be able to identify that aircraft, since no radio communications is required with Buchanan Field Airport's Control Tower.

Q: Are any aircraft exempt from the County Noise Ordinance?

A: Yes. They are: (1) Aircraft operated by the United States of America or the State of California; (2) Law enforcement, emergency, fire, or search and rescue; (3) Aircraft used in support of emergency or emergency relief; (4) Aircraft having to use the airport in a bona fide emergency for the preservation of life or property; (5) Civil Air Patrol aircraft when engaged in actual search and rescue missions; (6) Aircraft engaged in landings or takeoffs while conducting tests required by the Director of Airports or other authorized persons; (7) Itinerant aircraft engaged in emergency medical evacuation or transport; and (8) Aircraft engaged by or with the consent of the County Board of Supervisors for aerial exhibition.

BUCHANAN FIELD
AIRPORT / BYRON
AIRPORT

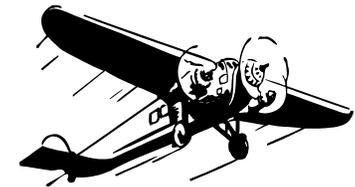
550 Sally Ride Drive
Concord, CA 94520-5550

Phone: 844-Fly-ToUs or 844-359-8687
Fax: 925-646-5731

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY AIRPORTS NOISE ABATEMENT PROGRAM

www.buchananfield-byronairports.org

How Complaints Regarding Aircraft Operations are Handled



Telephone:
**844-Fly-ToUs or
844-359-8687**

BUCHANAN FIELD
AIRPORT / BYRON AIRPORT

Overview

To serve our constituents better, this brochure was developed to provide an overview of the Contra Costa County Airports noise complaint process. The Airport staff hopes that this brochure is useful in explaining the complaint process, as well as, other County and Federal Aviation Administration regulations that affect how, where, and when aircraft fly. Feedback is always appreciated. Also, please see Contra Costa County Airports' web-site for additional information regarding noise management, including filing a noise complaint online. Our website address is www.buchananfield-byronairports.org



The Process

Contra Costa County citizens who are disturbed by aircraft operations are encouraged to call the Airport Complaint Hotline at 844-359-8687. When leaving your information on our Automated Voice System, please remember to leave your name, phone number, address, time & date of the incident, and a brief detailed description of your complaint.

The investigation process is initiated with a timely call from a concerned citizen regarding an aircraft operation. Airport staff then listens to the transmissions on all Buchanan Field Airport radio frequencies during the time the complaint occurred. A letter to the caller is created with an explanation of the information that was found during the investigation. If there is a violation of the County Noise Ordinance, a letter to the owner of the aircraft involved in the incident is also sent prohibiting that aircraft from operating at Buchanan Field Airport in the future.

All complaints are compiled in a spreadsheet that is tallied up monthly. That information is presented monthly to the Contra Costa County Aviation Advisory Committee for their review.

Question and Answer

Q: *Why do aircraft fly over my home sometimes more, sometimes less?*

A: For safe operations, aircraft must take off and land into the wind. Wind direction changes by season and even by time of day. Typically, this places aircraft over residential areas. Pilots are asked to utilize the noise abatement runways and avoid residential areas as much as possible.

Q: *What hours can aircraft fly into and out of Buchanan Field and Byron Airports?*

A: Buchanan Field and Byron Airports are 24 hour facilities. The Air Traffic Control Tower at Buchanan Field operates from 7:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m., seven days a week. Byron Airport does not have a control tower. Buchanan Field does have noise abatement requirements that restrict training type operations between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. Monday through Friday. This restriction extends until 8:00 a.m. on weekends and holidays.

Q: *Are jets prohibited from operating at Buchanan Field Airport?*

A: Jet aircraft are allowed to and do operate out of Buchanan Field Airport; however, most of the older model jets are prohibited from operating at Buchanan Field Airport by County Ordinance. No aircraft shall operate that exceeds 78dBA from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. For night time operations, 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m., the noise level shall not exceed 75dBA. An aircraft is rated by its take off noise level per FAA Advisory Circular 36-3.