

Ground Noise

What Gatwick is doing to help those affected by noise from aircraft while on the ground

Introduction

Those living close to our airport may hear noise from aircraft on the ground. Unlike the limits that apply to departing aircraft, there are no restrictions on other sources of noise that come from the airport. As a responsible business we appreciate it's important to strike a balance between the interests of the local community and the needs of airport users. So we have come up with various controls around the four main factors of ground noise.

Reverse thrust

Aircraft uses reverse thrust to slow it down once it has landed. To reduce disturbance in those areas close to Gatwick, we've asked pilots to avoid using reverse thrust after landing between 23:30 and 06:00 local time, unless for safety reasons. For example, a wet runway reverse thrust may be used for safety reasons.

Go to the 'noise explained' section at www.gatwickairport.com/noise for more details.

Taxiing to and from the runway

Aircraft have to taxi to and from the runway and it could be a fair distance.

We work with Air Traffic Control (ATC) to cut down the amount of time aircraft are waiting to take off or are taxiing. This is important from both an environmental and business point of view, with aircraft engines not running longer than necessary or blocking the runway and taxiways to other aircraft.

We also encourage our airlines to adopt single or reduced engine taxi procedures so aircraft taxi to the runway holding area with one or more engines shut down and only started up once they have lined up on the runway.

Engine testing

Following maintenance all aircraft engines must be thoroughly tested before an aircraft is allowed to fly – together with ground runs they are part of routine maintenance.

To keep noise to a minimum we allow this testing to only take place on two taxiways, Alpha and Juliet. In the unlikely event of these locations not being available, another appropriate location is found, although this is at the discretion of the Airfield Duty Manager.

Gatwick also restricts ground engine runs by location, time, aircraft type, durations and time of run. Except in an extreme event, aircraft cannot have engine runs or tests at speeds of above ground idle between 23:30 and 07:00 local time.

Our ground runs are included in our annual Flight Performance Reports published on our website www.gatwickairport.com/noise

Auxiliary Power Units (APUs)

APUs are small jet engines in the tail of an aircraft that provide power and cabin air conditioning while the aircraft is on the ground. To help reduce the noise Gatwick has put in conditions to limit their use and have supplied alternative systems.

All Gatwick's stands have Fixed Electrical Ground Power (FEPG) units. These basically plug an aircraft into the mains electrical supply while they are on the ground, which leads to a reduction in ground noise. Airlines also have Ground Power Units (GPUs), which are diesel generators. These do produce noise but not to the level of APUs. These are used if the FEPG is not available but we make sure their use is kept to a minimum.

We carry out regular checks of aircraft APU usage to make sure airlines are complying with our regulations. Any breach of the rules is raised directly with the airline concerned.

All our findings are part of our annual Flight Performance Reports published on our website.

