



Adelaide Airport Curfew Factsheet

FACTSHEET

Purpose of the Curfew

The Adelaide Airport curfew was introduced on 27 August 2000 to minimise the impact of aircraft noise on nearby residents. A limited number of aircraft movements are allowed during the curfew, but all aircraft operating during the curfew are required to take-off or land over Gulf St Vincent, unless the weather or operational requirements prevent this. This directs aircraft away from the city and reduces the impact of aircraft noise on residents.

Legislation

Adelaide Airport has a curfew governed by the following legislation:

- [Adelaide Airport Curfew Act 2000](#) (the Act); and
- [Adelaide Airport Curfew Regulations 2000](#) (the Regulations).

The curfew applies to aircraft operations between 11.00pm and 6.00am (local time). The Act allows the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development (the Department) to permit operators to take-off or land during the curfew by granting a curfew dispensation.

What aircraft can operate during the curfew?

The curfew does not prevent all aircraft movements during the curfew period. It limits aircraft movements between 11.00pm and 6.00am by restricting the types of aircraft that can operate, the number of flights permitted and the types of operation allowed. This enables a number of vital aviation services to be provided while limiting the effect of aircraft noise during curfew hours. On average, there are 10 aircraft movements per night during curfew hours, of which seven involve emergency services aircraft.

Emergency Aircraft and Aircraft Emergencies

The vital, often life-saving operations carried out by police, medical and search and rescue aircraft are too important to stop operating during the curfew.



In addition, any aircraft involved in an emergency is allowed to land, and take-off during the curfew for emergency service aircraft. For passenger aircraft they can resume a flight interrupted by a medical emergency.

Photo courtesy of the Motor Accident Commission of South Australia

Emergencies can include flights where the aircraft has insufficient fuel to divert to another airport, or where the aircraft needs to land to ensure the safety of the aircraft or anyone on board.

Low Noise Heavy Freight Aircraft

Overnight airfreight services operate on a quota system which allows a limited number of movements during the curfew each week by low noise heavy freight aircraft with a maximum noise level specified for take-off and landing under the Regulations.

The quota allows a maximum of 25 landings and 15 take-offs per week. These aircraft carry medical supplies, perishable produce and other items which require urgent delivery times.



B737-400F freight aircraft – Photo courtesy of Stefan P

Cobham British Aerospace 146 (BAe146) Maintenance Operations

Under an aircraft maintenance arrangement specified in the Adelaide Airport Dispensation Guidelines Cobham Aviation BAe146 aircraft undergoing scheduled maintenance or major repairs at Cobham's Adelaide Airport base may fly in or out of Adelaide Airport during the curfew. Cobham applies for a permission from the Department for a landing or take-off during the curfew for maintenance. The Department provides reports granting permission to the Adelaide Airport Consultative Committee.



BAe146 freight aircraft – Photo courtesy of Air Charter Network

Low Noise Jets



Low noise jet aircraft are allowed to operate during the curfew. These aircraft provide connections which may not be available on regular public transport flights due to curfew restrictions or traffic constraints.

Low noise jets must have a maximum take-off weight less than 34,000kgs and meet the latest international noise standards. On average, there are six low noise jet movements per month during the curfew.

Photo courtesy of Air Charter Network

Small Propeller-Driven Aircraft

Small (less than 34,000kgs) propeller-driven aircraft which meet international noise standards are also permitted to operate during the curfew.

These aircraft provide regional transport connections, and overnight freight. On average, there are 79 movements per month of small propeller-driven aircraft during the curfew.



Example of a small propeller-driven aircraft

Curfew Operating Conditions

During the curfew all aircraft must operate over Gulf St Vincent, using the main runway. Aircraft depart to the south-west over Gulf St Vincent, and arrive over the Gulf, landing to the northeast.

If weather conditions are such that Air Traffic Control are unable to nominate the preferred runway, the pilot in command will determine if operations over Gulf St Vincent are operationally suitable (safe) during the curfew.

If an aircraft (international curfew shoulder movements or low noise heavy freight aircraft) operating during the curfew is given clearance to take-off or land over the city, the aircraft operator is required to report to the Department within seven days. The Adelaide Airport Consultative Committee monitors those reports.

These operating conditions have been established to protect Adelaide residents from the impact of aircraft noise during the curfew.

Curfew Shoulder Movements

From April to October some aircraft schedules are moved forward to meet curfews at overseas airports which begin earlier in line with changes in northern summer time zones. As a result, a limited number of international aircraft arrivals are allowed in the morning curfew shoulder period between 5:00am-6:00am. The Regulations allow for a maximum of eight weekly arrivals. In 2017 there was one airline operating five days per week under this arrangement.

Curfew Dispensations

In exceptional circumstances aircraft operators may apply to the Department for approval to take-off or land during curfew hours (a curfew dispensation). All dispensation requests are made through a Curfew Duty Officer who will assess the situation in relation to a set of criteria which must be met before a dispensation can be granted.

Primary Criteria

For a dispensation to be granted, three primary criteria need to be satisfied:

1. The circumstances are immediate in origin, i.e. they originated during, or during preparation for, the take-off of a flight scheduled to fly directly to, or to depart from, Adelaide Airport.
2. The circumstances could not reasonably have been foreseen, e.g. mechanical failure, fail-to-board passengers requiring baggage offload, re-screening for security purposes.
3. The circumstances cannot reasonably be met by alternative arrangements, including diversion to an alternate airport, placing passengers on alternate flights, using alternate aircraft or airlines, other modes of transport, and flight cancellation.

General Criteria

Once the Primary Criteria are satisfied, a number of other factors may be considered in determining whether to grant permission to take-off or land, including:

- By what margin the take-off or landing falls into the curfew period (i.e. whether shortly after 11.00pm or shortly before 6.00am);
- Whether the cause of the delay is within the control of the operator;
- Whether the aircraft is able to take-off or land over Gulf St Vincent;
- The noise level of the aircraft;
- Number of passengers involved; and,

- The severity of the likely hardship.

At other airports subject to a curfew, a Curfew Duty Officer assessing a request for permission to take-off or land can only take into consideration circumstances relating to the flight into or out of that airport. However, at Adelaide Airport, applications for permission to take-off or land can include consideration of delays experienced in the previous sector.

This recognises that a number of international services to Adelaide have short turnarounds and can sometimes be affected by previous sector delays.

The Department conducts regular briefings with airline staff to ensure that airlines are well aware of the curfew regulations and procedures for applying for permission to take-off or land during the curfew.

Use of Reverse Thrust during Curfew Period

Freight aircraft landing during the curfew and international aircraft landing during the curfew shoulder period should not use reverse thrust at greater than idle. Reverse thrust is where an aircraft applies a form of braking using the engines, which will slow the aircraft quickly but can also create higher levels of noise.

Take-offs After Curfew

If an aircraft is granted permission to commence its taxi (meaning the aircraft can move under its own power) to the runway by Air Traffic Control prior to 11.00pm, it is allowed to take-off after 11.00pm without requiring permission from the Department. This can occur when an aircraft is ready to depart close to the curfew but is required to wait for arriving aircraft coming in to land. Aircraft granted pre-curfew taxi clearance usually depart up to 11.30pm depending on air traffic and weather conditions close to the beginning of the curfew period.

Designation as an Alternate Airport

An aircraft facing an urgent or emergency situation may request to be diverted to land at Adelaide Airport as an Alternate Airport. Adelaide Airport is the only airport with sufficient runway length for a diversion once aircraft have departed Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Darwin or Perth Airports:

- If an aircraft on an international service is diverted to Adelaide Airport it may land, and take-off to resume its flight, during the curfew period.

- If a domestic aircraft is diverted to Adelaide as an Alternate Airport, it may land there during the curfew period, but may not take-off during the curfew period.

For More Information

This fact sheet is intended as a guide. For detailed criteria on operations, please review the [Act](#), the [Regulations](#) and the [Dispensation Guidelines](#) on the Department website: [Curfew Information for Adelaide Airport](#).

More information on the Adelaide Airport Consultative Committee (AACC) can be found at the AACC [website](#).

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