

# DEPARTURES

The direction of departures from London Stansted is dependent on the wind direction.

Aircraft must take off and land into the wind. Most of the time at London Stansted, the wind comes from the south-west. Therefore, because aircraft must take off into the wind, the aircraft will depart to the south-west.

When the wind is from the north-east, aircraft will depart to the north-east.

See [Westerly and Easterly operations factsheet](#) for more information.

## Local procedures

There are a few local procedures that aircraft must follow. Aircraft should avoid flying over the centre of Bishop's Stortford and avoiding Sawbridgeworth and Stansted Mountfitchet when flying below a height of 2,500 ft above sea level. Aircraft must also be higher than 4,000 feet 5.67

## Take-off noise

People hear and react to noise differently. Noise levels can also appear different depending on the level of background noise, such as traffic or the sounds of everyday life.

The same noise can sound different depending on the weather conditions. For example, wind, high humidity, cloud and rain can also distort sound. This is why the same aircraft, flying in the same direction, at the same height, at the same time of day, can sound very different to someone from one day to another.

## Monitoring noise of departing aircraft at London Stansted Airport

Noise at London Stansted is regulated by the Government's Department for Transport (DfT). The DfT have set maximum noise levels for departing aircraft from London Stansted.

Different noise levels have been set for day and night, as there is more background noise during the day. The Government's night-time rules apply from 23:30hrs until 06:00hrs. There is also a 'shoulder period' at either end of the night, with slightly less strict rules. For more information please see the [Night Flight factsheet](#).

The limits set by the Department for Transport apply at 6.5km from the point on a runway where an aircraft starts to move in order to take off (known as 'start of roll'). These limits are:

When	Times	Noise limit
Day	07:00hrs – 23:00hrs	94 decibels
Day shoulder period	06:00hrs – 07:00hrs	89 decibels
Night shoulder period	23:00hrs – 23:30hrs	89 decibels
Night	23:30hrs – 06:00hrs	87 decibels

At London Stansted we have eight fixed noise monitors – four placed at each end of the runway. As the aircraft fly over these during take-off, the noise levels are recorded in the airport Noise and Track Keeping System (ANOMS).



The same noise can sound different depending on the weather conditions



## Fining airlines

The noise recordings are automatically recorded by the Noise and Track Keeping System in the Flight Evaluation Unit at London Stansted. If the level exceeds the limit set by the Government, the Airline concerned incurs a financial penalty, regardless of whether or not we receive a complaint about that departure.

All money collected from these infringements is distributed to the local community, environmental and schools' projects through the airport's Community Trust Fund.

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## Noise Preferential Routes

All jet aircraft and most propeller-driven aircraft departing from London Stansted Airport follow initial flight paths, known as Noise Preferential Routes (NPRs).

The NPRs at London Stansted were set by the Department for Transport in 1989. The routes were designed so that aircraft avoided flying over the larger populated areas until they had reached a minimum height. As an airport operator, London Stansted has no authority to change these routes.

As aircraft cannot fly in the same way that a train runs on tracks, this means that there will be some variation as to where different aircraft will be within the NPR. This is because all aircraft perform differently and may be affected by weather conditions which can cause them to drift to the left or right. It is for these reasons that each NPR has a 'swathe' measuring 1.5 kilometres either side of the route's centreline, resulting in a virtual corridor 3km wide. As long as the aircraft fly within this 3km corridor, they are considered to be on-track.

## The NPRs

London Stansted there are six noise preferential routes – three at each end of the runway.

Air Traffic Control (ATC) are responsible for the routing of aircraft once they are airborne and they make sure that aircraft stay on these routes until they reach a height of 4000ft above sea level on four of these routes, and 3000ft above sea level on the other two during the day (this also changes to 4000ft above sea level during the night period).

Once aircraft have climbed to the correct height, ATC can instruct the pilots to leave the NPR and fly a more direct heading towards their destination – this is known as 'vectoring'.

Additionally, ATC may direct aircraft off the NPR at a lower height if this is required for safe separation from other aircraft or for other safety issues such as weather avoidance.

Therefore, just because an aircraft does not appear to be following the NPR, it does not necessarily mean it is doing anything wrong.

As NPRs are used to provide set routes for aircraft to follow, it provides a degree of certainty as to which areas will be over flown by departing aircraft. Track keeping is taken very seriously at London Stansted and is closely monitored by our dedicated noise and track keeping system in the airport's Flight Evaluation Unit.



Over 99% of aircraft keep within the NPRs

NPRs are set and regulated by the Government

