
Flight Track Plot Sample - Turbojets

Flight track plots are a graphic illustration of the ground paths of airplane traffic, as observed from above, for a specific time period. The flight track plots represent arrivals and departures at Sea-Tac International Airport, according to the direction of traffic flow (north or south). These plots represent flight activity from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily.

A flight track sample gives the date and time range, the type of operation (arrival or departure), and the traffic flow direction. Each map has a legend; arrivals are red and departures are green. Fly-overs, such as flights from Renton Airport and King County International Airport, are shown in blue. Although some information about operations at other airports may show up on a flight track plot provided by Sea-Tac Airport's Noise Programs Office, it is best to contact the other airports for the details on those flights.

Whether an airplane departs to the north (north flow) or the south (south flow) depends on wind conditions. Aircraft arrive and depart heading into the wind. In the Puget Sound region, winds tend to flow out of the north during clear weather, necessitating departures to the north.

During an average year, Sea-Tac Airport experiences north flow approximately

35% of the time and south flow approximately 65% of the time.

The data used in creating the flight tracks is generated by the air traffic control system operated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). An antenna passively reads and collects flight track data from the FAA's Automated Radar Terminal System (ARTS). This antenna provides near-live continuous flight track data enabling staff to regularly monitor each noise abatement procedure. Citizens also can view the flight track data using WebTrak at <http://www.portseattle.org/community/environment/noiseabatement.shtml>

Aircraft flying identical procedures do not necessarily fly along the same ground track. Unlike trains and automobiles, airplanes in flight are not physically restrained to a narrow corridor, such as a roadway or railroad track. Aircraft are subject to variations in pilot technique, navigational aids, air traffic control, weather conditions, aircraft performance, and spacing with other aircraft. Therefore, even though several aircraft may be assigned the same route, their tracks and flight profiles along that route will not be identical.

The Noise Programs Office will provide, upon request, up to 4 pages of customized flight track maps or reports per residence per month.

Example of Sea-Tac jets during North Flow:



Example of Sea-Tac jets during South Flow:

