

# NOISE CONCERNS AT YYC CALGARY AIRPORT

## INTRODUCTION

Residents in the Northwest area of Calgary have raised concerns regarding aircraft noise and flying patterns, primarily because of the West Runway Rehabilitation project. Over the course of the project, there was an increase in the use of the East Runway at Calgary International Airport (YYC) and the Crosswinds Runway (northwest-southeast), with additional aircraft traffic travelling over the west Calgary and east Airdrie areas, until it concluded at the end of 2025.

With the West Runway now open, all runways at YYC are now operational. This change means that some adjustments will be noticed in flight paths.

## KEY MESSAGES

### **Why have there been changes in noise since spring 2024?**

Despite challenges such as spring weather and Calgary water restrictions, the West Runway Rehabilitation project was completed on time in December 2025. Over 2 years during the winter months, all runways at YYC had been fully operational and allowed for normal departures and arrivals. Community members concerned about the increased aircraft activity until December 2025 should be informed that this was a temporary situation due to the construction project. Noise levels will return to pre-2023 levels following the return of the west runway to normal operation.

### **Who Decides Where Planes Take Off?**

NAV CANADA, an independent entity operating the control tower, manages the airspace around Calgary, directing planes to specific runways to ensure safe and efficient operations. While Calgary Airports operates the airport and manages the airfield, it does not dictate which flight paths are used.

In the safety-based environment of aviation, NAV CANADA works with Calgary Airports, airlines, and our federal regulator (Transport Canada) to design the airspace and implement solutions where and when feasible. We continue to explore possible noise mitigations through regular discussions with our stakeholders, but any airspace change requires years of analysis and testing.

### **Normal Conditions Flight Paths**

Our usual operations utilize the East and West runways in a North/South pattern, known as “parallel configuration”. This is NAV CANADA’s preferred and most efficient setup, as it allows for smooth north–south traffic flow and helps distribute noise more evenly across the city.

YYC Calgary International Airport  
2000 Airport Road NE  
Calgary, AB, T2E 6W5

Unlike arrivals, departures do not adhere to fixed routes, and the point at which an aircraft begins its turn to head North can vary based on several factors, including aircraft performance, wind conditions, and weight. Ultimately, safety is the main factor, and aircrafts are directed by NAV CANADA to specific runways to ensure safe and efficient operations.

Nav Canada has not made any recent changes to flight paths or traffic patterns in northwest Calgary. Aircraft observed in Northwest Calgary area are most likely departures from the West Runway headed west, which are then redirected north after takeoff.

### **Windy Conditions/Chinook Weather Systems Flight Paths**

Calgary can experience persistent patterns of strong westerly and south-westerly winds caused by frequent Chinook weather systems. When winds are gusty, aircraft must take off and land into the wind to maintain safe performance and control.

During these conditions, operations must switch to the Crosswind runway (east–west pattern). The use of this runway changes typical flight paths — most departures head west after takeoff, which places more aircraft over northwest Calgary. Departures are generally the noisiest part of a flight because of the thrust and lift required as aircraft climb safely away from the runway. Once Chinook conditions ease, usually in the early morning or late evening, operations return to the preferred north–south configuration as soon as wind conditions allow. This shift reduces the concentration of noise over any single area.

Interesting fact: Operating on the east–west pattern runway (Crosswind Runway) is the least efficient runway operation at YYC. Because it's a single-runway configuration, NAV CANADA must safely reduce the number of aircraft movements per hour. This impacts overall air traffic flow and airline scheduling, which is why it is only used when weather conditions make it necessary.

## **HOW CALGARY AIRPORTS MANAGES NOISE AND COMMUNITY CONCERNS**

Calgary Airports takes a proactive approach to managing noise and engaging with the community in various forms:

1. **Engagement Through Community Associations:** The Airport Community Consultative Committee (ACCC) connects Calgary Airports with local community associations, the City of Calgary, Airdrie, and NAV Canada. This committee allows community associations to voice concerns and receive direct responses from airport personnel. It also serves as a platform for sharing updates on airport operations and upcoming projects. An invitation has been sent to the Hidden Valley community association to join the 2026 ACCC. Constituents are encouraged to ask their community associations to join the ACCC.
2. **Noise Complaint Submissions:** Calgary Airports provides a noise complaint webform and phoneline for residents to submit specific complaints about flights. Calgary Airports aims to respond to legitimate inquiries; however, aggressive, verbally abusive or threatening responses will not be tolerated and will not receive a

response. Residents are encouraged to submit concerns through this forum as it provides us with valuable feedback and information on potential issues.

3. **Noise Reduction Initiatives:** NAV CANADA, in partnership with Calgary Airports, launched a trial in 2019 to test alternate departure headings for aircraft on runways 17L and 17R. This trial aimed to reduce noise in residential areas by directing aircraft over non-residential land. Based on community feedback, the use of these alternate headings has been restricted between midnight and 6:00 a.m. but has otherwise been made permanent to help reduce noise impacts.
4. **Noise Monitoring Program at YYC:** YYC actively monitors aircraft noise in the Calgary region, using a network of 16 Noise Monitoring Terminals (NMTs) located in neighbouring communities that capture both aircraft and community noise data. We regularly replace and relocate some of our permanent NMT network sites to accurately portray the existing noise environment.

**Recommended Responses to Residents:**

If residents raise noise concerns, we encourage elected officials and their offices to direct them to the airport's noise concern web portal at <https://www.planenoise.com/cyyc/>, or they can leave a voicemail on our noise concern hotline: 403-735-1408.

## APPENDIX

