

Frequently Asked Questions & Answers

Reopening East West Runway



Q: How many runways does Sydney Airport have?

A: Sydney Airport has three runways:

- East-west runway, also known as runway 07/25
- Main north-south runway, also known as runway 16R/34L
- Parallel north-south runway, also known as runway 16L/34R

Q: When are the three runways typically used?

A: The Australian Government agency responsible for air traffic control – Airservices Australia – manages runway usage to ensure safety.

Weather – especially wind direction and strength and rain – is a major factor in deciding which runways can be safely used for take-off and landing. Aircraft generally take-off and land into the wind, or with minimal tail wind. Based on wind direction, air traffic control will decide which runway is used at any given time. However, the decision to take-off or land ultimately rests with the pilot-in-command of the aircraft.

Q: What is “noise sharing” and how is it implemented?

A: At Sydney Airport, the Australian Government’s noise sharing policy – known as the Long Term Operating Plan, or LTOP – also influences when a particular runway is used.

The LTOP is a program to manage aircraft noise from Sydney Airport. It aims to make sure flights are sent over water and non-residential land, as much as possible. Where this is not possible, it aims to share noise across communities in Sydney and provide periods of respite from noise.

It provides ten different ways of using the airport’s three runways and associated flight paths, some of which involve use of the east-west runway.

Further information on the LTOP can be found [here](#).

Q: Why was the east-west runway closed in the first place?

A: The COVID-19 pandemic delivered a crisis of unprecedented magnitude to the global aviation industry.

The number of domestic and international flights to and from Sydney Airport fell sharply throughout 2020, the latter by as much as 98 percent when compared to 2019.

With so few aircraft in the air, Sydney Airport closed the east-west runway in March 2020 so airlines could securely park their grounded aircraft. For the last year, there have been no aircraft landing on or taking off from that runway.

Q: When will the east-west runway reopen?

A: With the number of flights to and from Sydney now gradually increasing, the east-west runway is expected to reopen from mid-April 2021.

Q: Will the reopening of the east-west runway affect flights to and from Sydney Airport?

A: There have been no aircraft landing on or taking off from the east-west runway since March 2020. Once the runway reopens, people living in areas beneath the flight paths to and from that runway may notice aircraft flying overhead again. There will be no change to the airport curfew.

Q: How will flights in my local area be affected?

A: Areas to the east and west of Sydney Airport that lie beneath the flight paths to and from the east-west runway will be affected. Relevant suburbs include:

- Banksia, Kyeemagh, Rockdale and Bexley to the west of the airport
- Mascot, Pagewood, Eastlakes, Daceyville, Kingsford, Randwick (south of Clovelly Road), Coogee and South Coogee to the east of the airport.

People living in other suburbs may also notice flights using the east west runway.

Q: How many flights will be using the east-west runway from mid-April?

A: The number of flights using the east-west runway on any given day will depend on prevailing weather conditions and Airservices Australia's implementation of the LTOP.

For example, during periods of strong westerly or easterly winds, the east-west runway is the only runway that can safely be used. In other weather conditions, the east west runway is often used in combination with Sydney Airport's other two runways, particularly during non-peak periods.

Non-peak periods are typically:

- 6am to 7am
- 11am to 3pm
- 8pm to 11pm

Longer non-peak periods apply at weekends.

During 2019 – the last full year unaffected by the COVID-19 pandemic – up to 10 percent of all flights to and from Sydney Airport, or nearly 100 flights a day, used the east-west runway. In earlier years, that number has been higher.

Q: How to do I make a complaint about aircraft noise?

A: Airservices Australia is responsible for managing complaints and enquiries about aircraft noise and operations through its Noise Complaints and Information Service (NCIS).

You can lodge a complaint, comment, feedback or make an enquiry by:

- Phone **1800 802 584** (freecall), 9am - 10am and 2pm - 4pm (Sydney time), Tuesday - Thursday (excluding public holidays)
- Post Noise Complaints and Information Service, PO Box 211, Mascot NSW 1460

Further information can be found [here](#).

Q: Who can I speak to at Sydney Airport about this project?

A: Please contact Sydney Airport's Special Adviser Government and Community Relations, Mr Ted Plummer, on:

Phone: (02) 9667 6182

Email: runwaysafety@syd.com.au