

Airport & Aviation Terminology

Updated July 2019

Aircraft Operation: A landing or a takeoff.

Airport Operations: Arrivals and departures to and from an airport.

Airspace: The above-ground area in which aircraft travel. It contains routes, corridors and restricted zones for the safety and control of air traffic.

Air Traffic: Aircraft operating in flight or on airport runways.

Air Traffic Control (ATC): A federal government service managed by the Federal Aviation Administration that facilitates the safe and orderly movement of aircraft within and between airports.

Airport Noise and Capacity Act of 1990 (ANCA): The federal law that established a "national policy on aviation noise". Found under U.S. Code Title 49, Subtitle VII, Part B, Chapter 475, Subchapter II – National Aviation Noise Policy. This law generally said that no locality can adopt or change laws which further limit or restrict access to an airport.

Apron: An area of an airport where aircraft are parked and serviced and passengers and cargo are loaded and unloaded. Also called the ramp.

Area Navigation (RNAV): A method of navigation that allows aircraft to choose any course within a network of navigation beacons.

Arrival: When an aircraft lands at an airport.

Arrival Procedure: A series of air traffic control procedures, using navigational aids, to direct an aircraft as it lands at an airport.

Based Aircraft: An operational and airworthy aircraft that is based at an airport the majority of the year.

Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL): The noise metric used to measure cumulative aircraft noise impact in California.

County of Orange: The local government agency that, among other things, owns and operates John Wayne Airport. The County is governed by a five-member Board of Supervisors.

Decibel (dB): The standard unit of noise measurement.

Departure: When an aircraft takes off from an airport.

Departure Procedure: A series of air traffic control procedures, using navigational aids, to direct an aircraft as it departs from an airport.

Day-Night Average Sound Level (DNL): The energy-averaged sound level measured over a 24-hour period.

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA): A branch of the U.S. Department of Transportation. The FAA has sole authority over U.S. air space and thus controls all commercial flight paths and procedures.

Fixed Base Operator (FBO): A private company given the right to operate out of the airport and provide aeronautical services such as fueling, storage, parking, aircraft maintenance and flight instruction to the general aviation community.

General Aviation (GA): All civil aviation activity except regularly scheduled, commercial air carrier service. The category of general aviation aircraft includes private planes, corporate jets and helicopters.

General Aviation Facility (GAF): A facility used to provide Customs and Border Patrol processing and inspection services to international flights and passengers.

General Aviation Noise Ordinance (GANO): A County of Orange ordinance that codified noise standards. The GANO regulates the hours of operation and the maximum permitted noise levels associated with commercial and general aviation operations.

John Wayne Airport (JWA): A commercial airport owned and operated by the County of Orange.

John Wayne Airport Settlement Agreement (1985 Agreement): A legal document that has been amended over time. Four parties are signatories to the agreement – the City of Newport Beach, the County of Orange, Stop Polluting Our Newport (SPON), and the Airport Working Group (AWG). Among other things, the 1985 Agreement:

- Establishes day and night noise limits and locations for seven noise monitors on the JWA departure path. Planes must depart in a manner that does not exceed the established limits at these monitors.
- Sets forth a curfew. The curfew prohibits major air carriers from scheduling takeoffs before 7 a.m. (8 a.m. on Sundays) and after 10 p.m. (Note: A different curfew applies to general aviation, and it is noise-based. General aviation aircraft can depart before 7 a.m. if they meet nighttime noise limits.)
- Sets forth caps on passengers and the loudest flights. JWA currently handles about 10.5 million annual passengers and about 130 commercial carrier departures per day. Under the 1985 Agreement, the current cap on annual passengers is 10.8 million, but is permitted to grow to 11.8 million beginning in January 2021. The agreement also limits the number of Class A or noisiest aircraft that can fly out in any one day. It doesn't limit the total number of commercial flights, provided that the cap on total annual passengers is not exceeded.

Next Generation Air Transportation System (NextGen): An FAA program designed to improve the safety and efficiency of the national airspace system. NextGen represents the move from ground-based navigation to satellite-based navigation. Utilizing cockpit-based, advanced GPS technology, NextGen prescribes specific flight paths, essentially creating "freeways" of arrivals and departures. The result is that departing flights now follow more concentrated paths.

The City of Newport Beach sued the FAA in advance of NextGen's local implementation, arguing that the environmental assessment was inadequate. This litigation was settled in early 2018.

Noise Abatement Departure Procedure (NADP): A departure procedure designed to mitigate the impact of noise generated by a departing aircraft. The two used at John Wayne Airport – NADP-1 and NADP-2 – were approved by the FAA in the mid-1990s and are used nationwide.

Noise Event: Measured sound for a particular period of time. An aircraft noise event is recorded when the sound level exceeds a threshold for a specified period of time.

Single Event: One noise event.

Stage 1/2/3/4: Refers to types of aircraft, certified according to their specific noise levels. Stage 4 is the latest technology and represent the quietest aircraft in the fleet.