



Airport Curfews — General Information

Why is the Sydney Airport curfew important?

Curfews balance airport commercial operations and safety requirements with the need to reduce night-time aircraft noise for nearby communities.

A night-time curfew at Sydney Airport restricts flights between 11pm and 6am. Adelaide, Essendon and Coolangatta (Gold Coast) airports also have night-time curfews.

What does the curfew mean?

The *Sydney Airport Curfew Act 1995* does not stop all aircraft movements overnight. It limits take-offs and landings at Sydney Airport between 11pm and 6am by restricting:

- the types of aircraft that can operate
- the runways they can use
- the number of flights allowed.

Generally, passenger jet flights are not allowed in and out of Sydney Airport overnight.

What flights are allowed overnight?

Small propeller driven aircraft, 'low noise' jets that meet weight and noise requirements, and a limited number of freight aircraft can operate at night. This allows movement of time-critical freight including mail and fresh food.

A small number of international passenger jet movements can be approved during the shoulder period between 5am and 6am. This is to cover time differences associated with the northern hemisphere summer scheduling season.

During the curfew aircraft must operate over Botany Bay.

What about emergencies?

The curfew does not apply to aircraft involved in emergencies such as air ambulance, search and rescue or critical mechanical malfunctions.

What if the curfew is breached?

Curfews are legally enforceable and failing to comply is a criminal offence. Fines vary at the different airports, with a maximum penalty at Sydney Airport of \$550 000. The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government monitors curfew compliance.

Are there any exceptions?

The Federal Minister or his/her delegate may grant a dispensation in exceptional circumstances for an aircraft to operate during the curfew. Dispensations are the exception, not the rule.

The *Sydney Airport Curfew Act 1995* provides for legislated Guidelines that identify when a dispensation may be considered. This is only if three 'exceptional circumstance' criteria are met. These criteria assess whether the circumstances are unavoidable, unforeseen, and unable to be met by alternative arrangements.

If these three key criteria are met, other considerations may include the time of night, noise level, number of passengers involved and likely hardship.

For example, a dispensation may be granted for a large passenger jet delayed to off-load baggage for security reasons (e.g. because a checked-in passenger failed to board) that could not depart before curfew but could take-off shortly after 11pm.

How can the community have a say?

The community can have direct input into decisions about the operation of airports through local Community Consultative Forums, such as the Sydney Airport Community Forum (SACF).

SACF includes community, government and industry representatives. The group meets regularly and provides advice about reducing noise and related environmental issues, as well as improving consultation and communication with the community.

The Australian Government supports the existing curfew arrangements and there must be community consultation before any changes can be considered.

Curfew information: <https://secure.infrastructure.gov.au/WebForms/curfews/curfews.htm>

SACF information:
<http://www.sacf.infrastructure.gov.au/>