



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Aviation  
Administration**

000645  
011547

# Advisory Circular

---

**Subject:**

VISUAL FLIGHT RULES (VFR) FLIGHT  
NEAR NOISE-SENSITIVE AREAS

**Date:** 10/19/84

**Initiated by:** ATO-230

**AC No:** 91-36C

**Change:**

1. PURPOSE. This advisory circular encourages pilots making VFR flights near noise-sensitive areas to fly at altitudes higher than the minimum permitted by regulation and on flight paths which will reduce aircraft noise in such areas.

2. CANCELLATION. Advisory Circular 91-36B, VFR Flight Near Noise-Sensitive Areas, dated March 19, 1982, is cancelled.

3. BACKGROUND.

a. The Federal Aviation Administration continually receives complaints concerning low flying aircraft over noise-sensitive areas. These complaints have prompted requests for regulatory action prohibiting low altitude flight over identified noise-sensitive locations. We believe that a satisfactory solution can be realized by means of a pilot/industry cooperative endeavor rather than through the regulatory process.

b. Increased emphasis on improving the quality of the environment requires continued effort to provide relief and protection from aircraft noise.

c. Excessive aircraft noise can result in discomfort, inconvenience, or interference with the use and enjoyment of property, and can adversely affect wildlife. It is particularly undesirable near outdoor assemblies of persons, churches, hospitals, schools, nursing homes, noise-sensitive residential areas, and National Park Areas which should be preserved as important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage.

d. Adherence to the practices described below would be a practical indication of pilot concern for environmental improvement, would build support for aviation, and forestall possible regulatory action.

4. VOLUNTARY PRACTICES.

a. Avoidance of noise-sensitive areas, if practical, is preferable to overflight at relatively low altitudes.

b. Pilots operating fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft under VFR over noise-sensitive areas should make every effort to fly not less than 2,000 feet above the surface, weather permitting, even though flight at a lower level may be consistent with the provisions of Federal Aviation Regulations 91.79, Minimum Safe Altitudes.

---

Typical of noise-sensitive areas are: outdoor assemblies of persons, churches, hospitals, schools, nursing homes, residential areas designated as noise sensitive by airports or by an airport noise compatibility plan or program, and National Park Areas (including Parks, Forest, Primitive Areas, Wilderness Areas, Recreational Areas, National Seashores, National Monuments, National Lakeshores, and National Wildlife Refuge and Range Areas).

\* For the purpose of this Advisory Circular, the surface of a National Park Area is defined as: the highest terrain within 2,000 feet laterally of the route of flight, or the upper-most rim of a canyon or valley.\*

NOTE: The intent of the 2,000 feet recommendation is to reduce potential interference with wildlife, and complaints of noise disturbances from low-flying aircraft in canyons and valleys.

c. During departure or arrival from/to an airport, climb after takeoff and descent for landing should be made so as to avoid prolonged flight at low altitudes near noise-sensitive areas.

d. This procedure does not apply where it would conflict with air traffic control clearances or instructions or where an altitude of less than 2,000 feet is considered necessary by a pilot in order to adequately exercise his or her primary responsibility for safe flight.

5. COOPERATIVE ACTIONS. Aircraft operators, aviation associations, airport managers, and others are asked to assist in implementing the procedures contained herein by publicizing them and distributing information regarding known noise-sensitive areas.

R. J. Van Vuren  
Associate Administrator for Air Traffic, AAT-1

U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Aviation  
Administration**

800 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20591

BULK MAIL  
POSTAGE & FEES PAID  
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION  
PERMIT NO. G-44

**RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED**