



# Falcon Field Airport (FFZ) FLY FRIENDLY PROGRAM

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Aircraft Activity and Community Concerns

#### **Why is aircraft activity over Mesa increasing?**

Mesa and the surrounding region have grown rapidly, and with that growth comes more air traffic. Falcon Field has seen a rise in flight training activity, especially between 2023 and 2025, as new flight schools have chosen to operate here. This is largely due to a national pilot shortage and increased demand for aviation training—not because the City is recruiting flight schools.

We understand that this increase in activity has brought more aircraft noise to nearby neighborhoods. The City of Mesa hears your concerns and is actively working with operators to promote quieter practices and explore long-term solutions.

#### **Has the number of aircraft operations increased recently?**

Yes. Between 2022 and 2024, aircraft operations at Falcon Field increased by over 28%, with the largest jump in 2024. We recognize that this has had a real impact on residents, and we're committed to addressing these concerns with transparency and action.

#### **Why do so many planes seem to fly in circles?**

Many of the aircraft you see are conducting training flights, which often involve repeated takeoffs and landings in a pattern around the airport. This is a standard part of pilot training and helps ensure safety and proficiency. While these flights are essential, we know the noise can be frustrating. That's why we're working with flight schools to vary routes when possible and raise awareness about noise-sensitive areas.

#### **What is the City doing to reduce aircraft noise?**

We've taken several steps to reduce noise impacts, including:

- Working with flight schools to promote voluntary noise abatement procedures
- Installed upgraded runway lighting to encourage higher approaches
- Supporting the use of flight simulators to reduce actual flight time
- Hosting regular meetings with operators to discuss noise concerns
- Launched a voluntary noise abatement training video and guide
- Procured advanced flight tracking software to better understand activity patterns

We're also encouraging the transition to quieter, electric aircraft as this technology becomes available.

### **Can the City limit flight training or restrict certain types of aircraft?**

Unfortunately, no. Falcon Field is a public-use airport and must remain open to all types of aviation activity. However, we are using every tool available—education, outreach, and collaboration—to encourage responsible flying and reduce community impacts.

### **Why does flight training happen at night?**

Night flying is a required part of pilot training and certification. Pilots must log a certain number of night takeoffs and landings to stay current. We understand that night flights can be especially disruptive, and we're working with operators to minimize unnecessary nighttime activity whenever possible.



## **Flight Paths and Airspace**

### **Who controls flight paths and altitudes?**

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) manages all flight paths and airspace. Falcon Field's control tower handles traffic within a 5-mile radius, but broader routing decisions are made by regional FAA facilities. The City does not have authority to change flight paths.

### **Why can't the City change where planes fly?**

Airspace design is a complex, federally managed process. Even small changes can take years to evaluate and implement. That said, we continue to advocate for community concerns and share feedback with the FAA.



## **Noise Reporting and Community Feedback**

### **How can I report aircraft noise?**

You can submit concerns online at:

[Submit a Noise Concern](#)

All submissions are reviewed by City staff, and we follow up with operators when appropriate.

### **What happens after I submit a concern?**

We document and investigate every comment. If we identify patterns or specific issues, we reach out to operators to encourage compliance with voluntary noise procedures. In cases involving safety, we refer concerns to the FAA.

### **Can I meet with air traffic controllers?**

Controllers do not meet with the public directly, but the City regularly communicates with them and can pass along community feedback.



## **Sustainability and the Future**

### **Is Falcon Field supporting electric aircraft?**

Yes! We're working with local flight schools and have received grants to plan for electric aircraft infrastructure. As technology advances and FAA approvals are finalized, we're committed to supporting a quieter, cleaner future for aviation.

### **What about unleaded aviation fuel?**

The City supports the transition to unleaded fuel, but we cannot ban leaded fuel under current federal rules. We're working with fuel providers and operators to prepare for the shift once safe, certified alternatives are widely available.

## **Living Near the Airport**

### **I'm thinking of moving to Northeast Mesa. Will aircraft noise be an issue?**

Falcon Field is a busy general aviation airport, and aircraft noise is a reality in the surrounding area. We encourage prospective homebuyers to visit neighborhoods at different times of day and talk to neighbors to understand what to expect. Arizona law also requires disclosure of airport influence areas during real estate transactions.

## **Understanding Aircraft Noise**

### **When are aircraft the loudest?**

Most noise complaints come from aircraft during takeoff, when engines are at full power and planes are still low to the ground. Several factors can affect how loud an aircraft sounds, including:

- **Aircraft type** – Some smaller aircraft can be surprisingly noisy.
- **Weight** – Heavier aircraft climb more slowly and use more power.
- **Weather** – Low clouds or cooler air can reflect sound back to the ground.
- **Time of day** – Noise is more noticeable at night or early morning when surroundings are quieter.

### **How does weather or season affect aircraft noise?**

Cooler months often mean more open windows and time spent outdoors, which can make noise more noticeable. In summer, hot air reduces aircraft performance, requiring more power and longer climbs—both of which can increase noise. Cloud cover can also amplify sound by bouncing it back toward the ground.

## **Airport Operations and Oversight**

### **Can the City limit who flies into Falcon Field?**

No. Falcon Field is a public-use airport and must remain open to all types of aviation activity. The City cannot restrict access based on aircraft type or operator. However, we do work closely with tenants to promote responsible operations and voluntary noise reduction.

### **Why does the City allow more flight schools to operate at Falcon Field?**

The City does not recruit or market to flight schools. These businesses choose to locate here based on market demand and available space. When space is available and safety requirements are met, the airport must accommodate aeronautical users. Currently, 92% of airport land is already leased, limiting future expansion.

### **Can the City require quieter aircraft or mufflers?**

No. Aircraft noise standards and equipment requirements are set by the FAA. The City cannot mandate modifications like mufflers or restrict aircraft that meet federal certification standards. Instead, we focus on education and voluntary cooperation to reduce noise impacts.

## **Environmental Responsibility**

### **Is Falcon Field transitioning to unleaded aviation fuel?**

Yes, we support the transition. However, the City cannot ban leaded fuel under current federal rules. We're working with fuel providers and operators to prepare for the shift once safe, certified alternatives are widely available and affordable. We've also met with local flight schools to support electrification of training fleets.

## **Planning and Land Use**

### **Why hasn't the City completed a formal noise study (Part 150)?**

A Part 150 study is a detailed FAA process that evaluates noise impacts and potential mitigation strategies. While no decision has been made yet, the City continues to explore all options to better understand and address community concerns.

### **Can the City stop accepting federal grants to gain more control?**

Turning down federal and state funding would mean losing millions in support for airport improvements. It would also shift the financial burden to local taxpayers. Even without grants, the airport would still be required to remain open to public use under existing obligations.

## **Homebuyers/Renters and Airport Influence**

### **What is a 65 DNL noise contour?**

It's a measurement used to estimate average noise exposure over time. Areas within the 65 DNL contour are generally considered to have higher levels of aircraft noise. However, noise sensitivity varies by person, and some may be affected even outside this area.

### **I'm considering buying a home near Falcon Field. What should I know?**

We encourage you to visit the area at different times of day and talk to neighbors. Northeast Mesa is within the airport's overflight area, and aircraft noise is a part of daily life. Arizona law requires disclosure of airport influence areas during real estate transactions, and many communities include this information in their documents.

## **Safety and Oversight**

### **Who investigates low-flying or unsafe aircraft?**

The FAA is responsible for investigating safety concerns. If you witness unsafe behavior, you can report it to the FAA's Flight Standards District Office in Scottsdale. The City can assist by forwarding concerns when appropriate.

### **What happens if pilots don't follow noise abatement procedures?**

Falcon Field's noise abatement program is voluntary. While we can't enforce penalties, we do follow up with operators, provide education, and encourage best practices. If safety issues are involved, we refer them to the FAA.

## **Who's Involved in Aviation Oversight?**

- **FAA** – Manages airspace, certifies aircraft, and enforces flight rules.
- **City of Mesa** – Oversees airport operations, land use, and community engagement.

- **Flight Schools & Pilots** – Responsible for safe and courteous flying.
- **Residents** – Play a key role by sharing concerns and helping shape solutions.

## **Final Thoughts**

We understand that aircraft noise can be frustrating, and we're committed to working with you to find solutions. While many aspects of aviation are federally regulated, the City of Mesa is stepping up efforts to listen, educate, and advocate for our community.

If you have questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out. We're here to help.