

BRISBANE AIRSPACE CHANGE FOR MEDICAL HELICOPTERS FACT SHEET

Airservices will make changes from November 2019 to the airspace in Central Brisbane to allow easier access for medical and emergency helicopters.

Why are the changes necessary?

Medical helicopters often transport patients to and from hospitals in central Brisbane, including Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, Princess Alexandra Hospital, Mater Hospital and Queensland Children's Hospital.

Currently these helicopters have to ask for clearance from Brisbane Air Traffic Control, which can lead to delays.

This is because the helicopters are operating in [controlled airspace](#) (**Figure 1 – Class C**) meaning they have to share it with other aircraft who are also receiving instructions from Air Traffic Control.

We want to change an area of airspace between these hospitals to be [uncontrolled airspace](#) (**Figure 1 – Class G**), meaning aircraft do not need clearance from Air Traffic Control to use it.

This change will make it easier and quicker for medical helicopters to get to and from these hospitals.

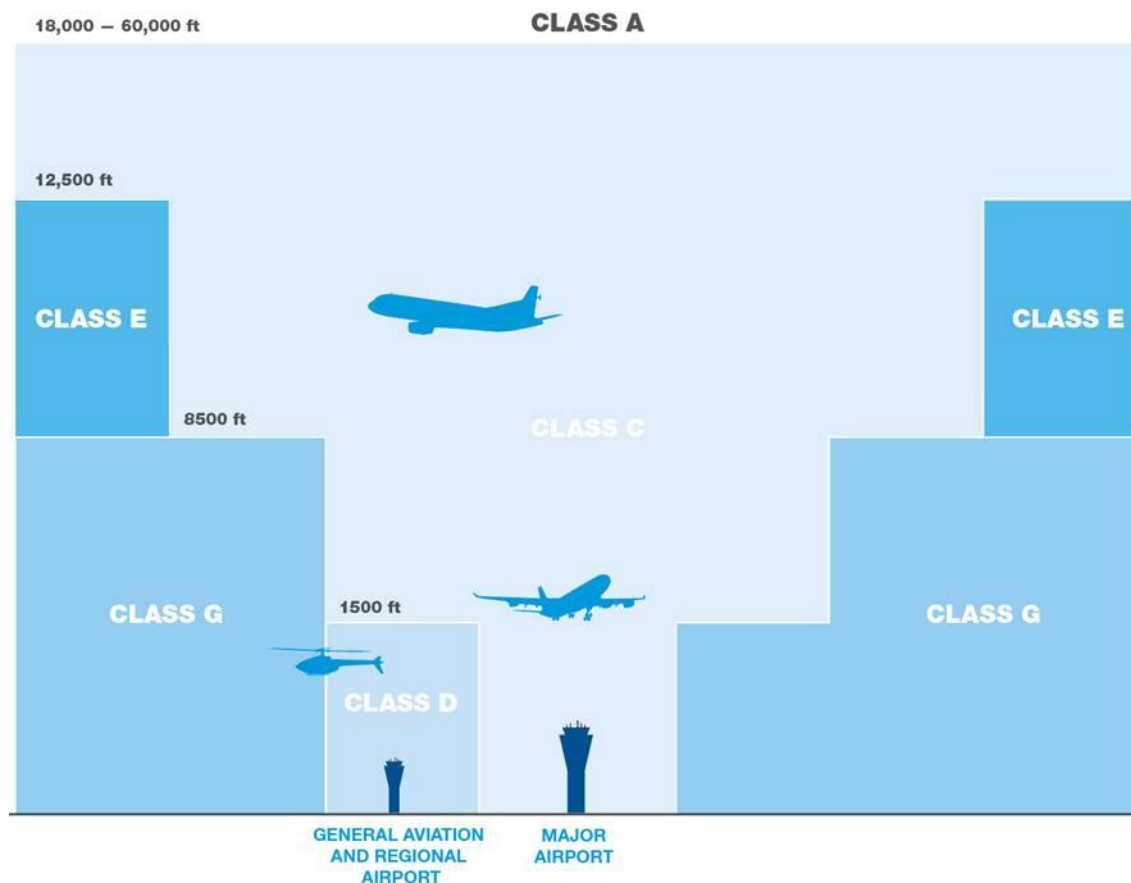


Figure 1: Controlled and Uncontrolled Airspace in Australia

What is going to change?

To allow medical helicopters to easily access hospitals we will need to create a new area of [uncontrolled airspace](#). This area will be in a triangular shape between the hospitals in central Brisbane (**Figure 2**). The maximum height of this airspace will be 700 feet.



Figure 2: Proposed changes to airspace in central Brisbane

Key: ● Current boundary between controlled and uncontrolled airspace
 ■ Proposed area of extended uncontrolled airspace (ground to 700 feet only)

What will I see?

We do not expect there to be changes in the number or type of helicopters using this area, the flight paths helicopters use or the noise levels of helicopters as a result of this change.

Currently around 2,000 helicopters use this area each year during the day. The majority of these helicopters are medical and rescue helicopters (approximately 1,900), with occasional military, police and other types of helicopters also using the area.

- On average 5 helicopters use this area each day, but the community could see between 0 and 17 helicopters a day.

Around 500 helicopters use this area each year at night (between 11pm and 6am).

- On average 1 helicopter uses this area each night (between 11pm and 6am)

The majority of these helicopters fly between 200 feet and 700 feet, with the average height being 400 feet.

What will I hear?

The average noise level of helicopters using these area varies between 66 and 88 decibels (dB(A))¹. This will remain the same as current levels.

What influences the noise I hear from an aircraft?

The level of noise you hear from an aircraft during take-off, landing and during flight can vary. Aircraft noise is influenced by a number of different factors, including:

- The weather, including season, wind and cloud cover
- The height of an aircraft
- Changes in engine thrust
- Type of aircraft

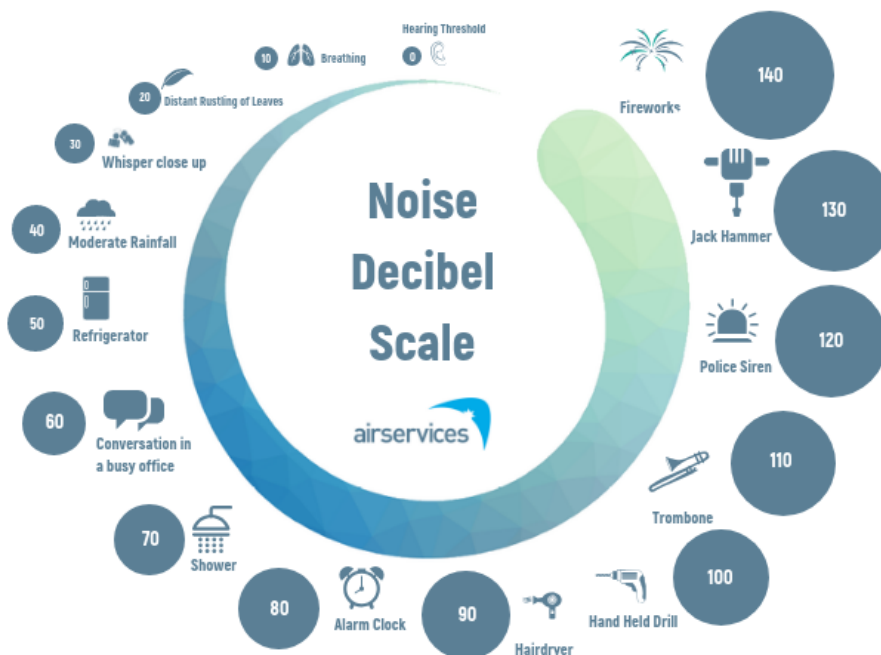
People react differently to noise and what you hear can be influenced by many different factors including your surroundings and other activities happening in the background.

How is aircraft noise measured?

Sound is measured in decibels (dB). The sound level of typical daytime activities can vary between 40 dB and 85 dB. Typical aircraft noise levels are between 65 dB and 95 dB.

Some examples of noise decibel measurements include:

- Modern twin-engine jet (at 1km from the end of the runway) 82 dB(A)
- Construction Site 90 dB(A)
- Roadways 80 dB(A)
- Cafes 50-70 dB(A)
- Libraries 30-40 dB(A)



Who will be able to use the new airspace?

Any aircraft may enter uncontrolled airspace and we cannot place restrictions on the type or number of aircraft who use the area. However to discourage other types of aircraft (for example sightseeing helicopters or planes) from using the area we will put height restrictions on the airspace. The maximum height of 700 feet will not allow aircraft to fly through the airspace on their way to other locations (overflying aircraft must stay above 1,000 feet).

There are currently five helipads located in the area and all are on rooftops of the four hospitals (two are located at Royal Brisbane Women's Hospital). These helipads are only available for use by medical and emergency helicopters and therefore other types of helicopter have limited reason to use the new uncontrolled airspace. In the future new helipads may be constructed in the area, but these will be subject to relevant local and state government planning approvals.

When will this change occur?

Implementation of this change is planned for November 2019.

How can I get more information?

For general information on flight path changes, contact the Noise Complaints and Information Service (NCIS) on:

- 1800 802 584 (free call)
- 131 450 (interpreter service)



General feedback can be provided:

- Via online form at: <https://feedback.emsbk.com/asa>
- Mail to: Feedback c/o Noise Complaints and Information Service, PO BOX 211 Mascot NSW 1460

1. dB(A): Decibels adjusted to reflect the ear's response to different frequencies of sound.