Germany don’t like it if you’re late

OPSGROUP Team
26 October, 2022

There is an old stereotype about Germans blocking poolside seats with their towels so others can’t use them. Well, it turns out they do something similar at their airports – sticking strict night flight restrictions and curfews on them so no-one else can use them until morning.

OK, that isn’t actually remotely similar, but the bit about the night flight restrictions is, so we thought a little refresher on them might be handy since we are heading into Christmas market season soon and Germany is one of the very best spots for that.

Why do they have such strict restrictions and curfews?

Noise mainly. They like their people to get a good nights sleep.

What do the restrictions look like?

It differs from airport to airport depending on the laziness of the locals *(that’s a joke),* but in general it looks like **a strict cut-off time followed by no flying at night.**

You can find them in the Aerodrome bit of the AIP.

2. Lärmschutz

2.1 Piloten haben auf dem Flughafen München und in seiner Nähe Lärm-belästigungen, die durch Triebwerke der Luftfahrzeuge verursacht werden, auf das unvermeidbare Mindestmaß zu beschränken. Das gilt insbesondere für die Zeiten der Nachtflugbeschränkung.

2.2 Einschränkungen des Nachtluftverkehrs

In der Zeit von 2100 (2000) bis 0500 (0400) unterliegt der Flugbetrieb aus Lärmschutzgründen folgenden Beschränkungen:

2.2.1 Betriebszeitenbeschränkungen

Nachtflüge sind nur nach folgenden Maßgaben zulässig:

Mit Luftfahrzeugen, die die Lärmgrenzwerte des Anhangs 16 Kapitel 3 zum ICAO-Abkommen nicht überschreiten

2.2.1.1 Im gewerblichen Linien- und Bedarfsluftverkehr

2.2.1.1.1 bis zu 28 planmäßige Flugbewegungen in der Zeit

– von 2100 (2000) bis 2230 (2130) für Starts und Landungen,

– von 0400 (0300) bis 0500 (0400) nur für Landungen

Interkontinentalflüge haben Vorrang, in Ausnahmefällen und bei Vorliegen eines besonderen Verkehrsinteresses dürfen derartige Flüge bis 2300 (2200) geplant werden;

2.2.1.1.2 verspätete Landungen und Starts in der Zeit

– von 2100 (2000) bis 2300 (2200), sofern die planmäßige Ankunfts- oder Abflugzeit am oder vom Flughafen München vor 2100 (2000) liegt bzw. bei Flugbewegungen nach den Nummern 2.2.1.1.1, 2.2.1.1.3 und 2.2.1.2 vor 2230 (2130) und die Ankunft oder der Abflug vor 2300 (2200) erfolgt;

verfrühte Landungen in der Zeit

– von 0400 (0300) bis 0500 (0400), sofern die planmäßige Ankunftszeit nach 0500 (0400) liegt

2.2.1.1.3 Flüge von Luftfahrtunternehmen, die einen Wartungsschwerpunkt ihrer Luftfahrzeuge auf dem Flughafen München haben in der Zeit

– von 2100 (2000) bis 2230 (2130) für alle Landungen sowie für planmäßige Starts von Flügen im Interkontinentalverkehr,

– von 0400 (0300) bis 0500 (0400) für Starts zu Überführungsflügen (Leerflügen) und für Landungen im Interkontinentalverkehr;

in Ausnahmefällen und bei Vorliegen eines besonderen Verkehrsinteresses dürfen Flüge im Interkontinentalverkehr bis 2300 (2200)geplant werden;

2.2.1.2 Planmäßige Starts oder Landungen von Flugzeugen, die an jeder einzelnen Lärmmessstelle in der Umgebung das Flughafens München im Mittel keinen höheren Einzelschallpegel als 75 dB(A) erzeugen, in der Zeit von 2100 (2000) bis 2230 (2130), von 0400 (0300) bis 0500 (0400).

Diese Regelung gilt nachrangig auch für Passagierflüge von Luftfahrtunternehmen mit Flugzeugen mit einer zulässigen Gesamtabflugmasse von mehr als 12 Tonnen, sofern derartige Flüge regelmäßig durchgeführt und am Vortag beim Flughafenkoordinator angemeldet werden;

Anschrift:

Flughafenkoordinator der Bundesrepublik Deutschland
Terminal 2 (FAC II), Bereich E, HBK Nr. 37
60549 Frankfurt/Main

Tel.: +49 69 257585 120
Fax: +49 69 690-50811
E-Mail: FRAZTXH@FHKD.ORG
Internet: www.fhkd.org

2.2.1.3 Flüge, die für Dienstleistungen im Sinne des § 4 Nr. 1a PostG vom 22 Dezember 1997 (BGBl. 1 S. 3294) erbracht oder als Vermessungsflüge zur Kalibrierung von Navigationsanlagen durchgeführt werden, in der Zeit von 2100 (2000) bis 0500 (0400);

2. Noise Protection

2.1 Pilots shall reduce noise disturbance caused by aircraft engines, to an unavoidable minimum, at München Airport and in its vicinity. This applies in particular to the times of night flying restrictions.

2.2 Night Flying Restrictions

From 2100 (2000)until 0500 (0400), flight operations are subject to the following restrictions for noise abatement reasons:

2.2.1 Restrictions regarding operating times

Night flights are only permitted with the following provisons:

With aircraft not exceeding the noise limits as stipulated by Annex 16 Section 3 of the ICAO Convention

2.2.1.1 In commercial scheduled air service and charter services

2.2.1.1.1 up to 28 scheduled flight movements in the period

– from 2100 (2000) until 2230 (2130) for take-offs and landings,

– from 0400 (0300) until 0500 (0400) for landings only;

Intercontinental flights shall have priority; in exceptional cases and if there is a particular traffic-related interest, such flights may be planned up to 2300 (2200);

2.2.1.1.2 Delayed landings and take-offs in the period

– from 2100 until 2300, provided the scheduled time of arrival or departure at or from München Airport is planned before 2100 (2000) or in the case of flight movements in accordance with numbers 2.2.1.1.1, 2.2.1.1.3 and 2.2.1.2 before 2230 (2130) and the arrival or departure is before 2300 (2200)

Early landings in the period

– from 0400 (0300) until 0500 (0400), provided the scheduled arrival time is planned after 0500 (0400).

2.2.1.1.3 Flights by airlines whose aircraft are mainly maintained at München Airport in the period

– from 2100 (2000) until 2230 (2130) for all landings and for scheduled take-offs of flights in intercontinental traffic,

– from 0400 (0300) until 0500 (0400) for take-offs for ferry flights (empty flights) and for landings in intercontinental traffic;

in exceptional cases and if there is a particular traffic-related interest, flights in intercontinental traffic may be planned up to 2300 (2200);

2.2.1.2 Scheduled take-offs or landings of aircraft that do not generate on average an individual noise level exeeding 75 dB(A) at any single noise measuring point in the vicinity of München Airport, in the period from 2100 (2000) until 2230 (2130), from 0400 (0300) until 0500 (0400).

This regulation shall also apply with lower priority to passenger flights by airlines with aircraft with a maximum take-off weight of more than 12 tons, provided such flights are carried out regularly and are reported to the Airport Coordinator of the Federal Republic of Germany the day before;

Address:

Airport Coordinator of the Federal Republic of Germany
Terminal 2 (FAC II), Bereich E, HBK Nr. 37
60549 Frankfurt/Main

Tel.: +49 69 257585 120
Fax: +49 69 690-50811
E-mail: FRAZTXH@FHKD.ORG
Internet: www.fhkd.org

2.2.1.3 Flights that are performed for services pursuant to § 4 No. 1 a PostG (Postal Act) dated 22nd December 1997 (Official Federal Gazette I, page 3294) or are carried out as surveying flights for the calibration of navigational aids from 2100 (2000) until 0500 (0400);

There it is.

There is also a very handy tool on the German Slot Coordination website. It has info on night restrictions at IATA level 2/3 airports, (much easier than scrolling through the AIP).

But here is a brief look at some of the main airports and their restrictions *(all times in local)* to give you an idea:

EDDH/Hamburg

The restriction is from **23:00-06:00**

If you are scheduled to land before 23:00 and you've got a really good reason (ie not your fault you're late), then they do have some special regulations allowing flights to take off and and up to midnight.

EDDB/Berlin

Berlin's retraction is **00:00-05:00** for all regular scheduled flights.

They have a reduced number of movements between 23:00 and midnight, and between 05:00 and 06:00 (31 movements are allowed), and they reserve **05:00-05:30 and 23:30-00:00 for delayed flights only.**

EDDP/Leipzig

23:30-05:30 with a 30 minute window either side for late flights.

Cargo flights have no restriction but no, you can't call passengers cargo.

EDDL/Dusseldorf

22:00-06:00, but they allow landings up to 23:00 (up to 23:30 if you're on their "bonus" list)

You can also get in even later/earlier if Dusseldorf is a proper maintenance base for you (basically a home base)

EDDF/Frankfurt

23:00-05:00

Frankfurt has a bunch of special regulations based on your noise certs, scheduled movement restrictions, if you're trying to land on the north-west runway. Basically…. 11pm to 5am is going to apply unless you're lucky or special.

EDDS/Stuttgart

22:00-06:00, but you've got a 30 minute lateness window for landing.

There are some different exemptions if you're a prop aircraft for example.

EDDM/Munich

10pm to 6am as part of a 'modern, restrictive noise quota system'.

That noise thing can win you a spot of their **bonus list** which means you might be able to land within the restricted hours (but probably not between midnight and 5am which is their 'core night' period).

What's "noisy"?

Well, again it differs from airport to airport but generally something around the 75dB[A] mark is what the likes of EDDM/Munich measure.

But then they say this, so we aren't really sure:

Limiting measures (noise quota)

Night flights are permitted only to the extent that the total noise caused by all night flights does not exceed a specified maximum annual quota.

Moreover, the energy-equivalent continuous noise level "Leq" in the average night in a calendar year at the points of intersection of the flight paths with the boundary of the combined day/night protection zone cannot exceed 50 dB(A).

You're better checking it directly at the airport than us trying to summarise them all.

What is the bonus list?

It is something published by the *"Bundesministrium für Verkehr, Bau und Wohnungswesen"* and basically lists a bunch of types which are exempt from the noise regulations. We can't find it, but we do know that the B737-600/700/800 is included on it, if that helps anyone.

2.2.3 Modified Bonus List

Beginning with the summer flight plan 2002, take-offs and landings in the period from 2100 (2000) until 0500 (0400) are only allowed with aircraft that are listed in the actual bonus list of the „Bundesministerium für Verkehr, Bau- und Wohnungswesen". This list has been extended by the authorizing agency to include the aircraft types B737-600/700/800. Flights according to paragraphs 2.2.1.1.2 and 2.2.1.2 are exempt from this regulation. The authorizing agency reserves the right to modify the list beginning in the year 2004.

For additional information see NfL I-152/01.

2.3 Reverse Thrust

When landing, reverse thrust may only be used to the extent necessary for safety reasons. The position of the thrust levers in the aircraft on "idle reverse thrust" is not covered by this regulation.

2.4 Engine Test Runs

We read it here

Who is restricted?

Probably you. The restrictions reply to pretty much everyone, save a few exceptions.

These are the exceptions (that we know of):

- Emergency diversions
- Flights needing to use them as an alternate due weather, tech or safety reasons (that doesn't mean planning them as weather alternates after hours though)
- Disaster relief flight
- Medical flights
- Search and rescue flights

- Police flights
- Mail flights
- Flights that have special permits pre-arranged

What do I do if I’m late?

Well, try not to be, but if you really can’t help it…

Whatever the lateness reason, getting a message to your handler at the airport to help pre-arrange things is probably a good idea.

These are strict curfews though, there ain’t no wiggle room. The only way you’ll be getting in inside of them is if it is a genuine emergency.

- If you are delayed en-route then chances are you will not be cleared the arrival or approach and will be sent on a diversion elsewhere
- If you are on the arrival this doesn’t mean you’ll definitely be allowed to land
- If you are on the approach then you may not be given landing clearance. Harsh, but I’ve heard it happening
- If you have been cleared to land then you have been cleared to land and all should be good
- If you end up flying a missed approach then whether they can accept you for a second approach and landing depends on the situation. No ATC is going to prioritise a noise curfew over safety, but, we’ll say it again, those curfews are strict! It may need to be an emergency
- If you are delayed on the ground then you’re not going anywhere

When considering alternates, remember it isn’t just in Germany – there are several spots in Europe with similar restrictions.