



Sound Abatement & Community Compatibility

Recommended Best Practices for Operators and Pilots

When you fly

a helicopter, drone, or any aircraft, you're flying over people, homes, businesses, and wildlife. Vertical Aviation International (VAI) recommends that you be a good neighbor and do all that you can to minimize the sound signature of your aircraft.

Whether your mission is a routine ferry flight or responding to an urgent emergency call, the sound of your aircraft and the disturbance it creates can have lasting effects on communities and the environment—and on your ability to fly that route in the future. One pilot's carelessness

can lead, eventually, to complaints, restrictions, or even closure of airspace.

The VAI Fly Neighborly program protects both your operational freedom and the public's confidence in our industry as a community asset. Every considerate flight strengthens the public's trust and preserves access for all operators and pilots. By respecting communities and minimizing disturbance, you ensure that helicopter and drone operations remain welcome—today and in the future.

Take the simple steps outlined

below to reduce your impact and build positive community relations. Remember: The flight department you save by flying neighborly may be your own!

Note: The responsibility of operators and pilots for maintaining flight safety must always be their top priority, followed by regulatory compliance and then operational considerations. The recommended best practices below are never meant to supersede those obligations.

Recommended Best Practices

Respect Those Below

- Always consider how your flight affects people, animals, and the landscape over which you fly.
- Avoid unnecessary overflight of sensitive areas (parks, residential areas, schools, hospitals, livestock, wildlife refuges).
- Avoid aggressive maneuvers or repeated overflights of the same location.
- Fly over others as you would have others fly over YOU!

Know Local Sound-Abatement Rules

- Familiarize yourself with published sound-abatement routes, altitudes, and restrictions.
- Recheck procedures periodically as they may change.

Time Your Operations Thoughtfully (When Possible)

- Avoid operations in the early mornings (before 0700) and evenings (after 1700).
- Limit flights during weekends and public holidays.

SOUND ABATEMENT & COMMUNITY COMPATIBILITY CONT'D

Plan Quieter Routes (Where Possible)

- Choose flight paths over less populated or industrial areas.
- Use natural corridors (rivers, highways) to mask sound.

Maintain Safe and Considerate Altitudes (Where Possible)

- Fly at minimum heights (unless taking off, landing, or officially authorized):
 - » Populated areas: 1,000 ft. agl.
 - » Nonpopulated areas: 500 ft. agl.
- Only descend below these minima for the actual task or mission, not while transiting.

Use Fly Neighborly Techniques (When Possible)

- Apply recommended low-noise power settings, approach angles, and rotor/propeller management.
- Refer to OEMs and VAI (verticalavi.org/initiatives/fly-neighborly) for training materials.
- Discuss your routes with the tower: Is there a better route?

Communicate with Your Community

- Establish a point of contact in your organization who can answer questions or concerns for local authorities or residents. Connect that person with the local community.
- Provide advance notice for planned large-scale aerial activities such as pipeline surveys, firefighting training, or drone mapping.
- Network with your local government, business, and aviation leaders. Make sure they know you're committed to community compatibility. Educate them about the types of missions you fly and how they contribute to the community's safety, security, and prosperity.
- Be an active supporter of your community. Get involved with school career days, attend local fairs and festivals, and participate in community charities or sponsorships.
- Keep a log of community feedback to inform future flight planning. Follow up on complaints, and if they're valid, address your organization's gap in communications, policies and procedures, or training that contributed to them.

Lead by Example

- Be a Fly Neighborly ambassador in your organization and in your local aviation community. When the actions of one inconsiderate pilot or operator lead to airspace restrictions, everyone will be affected.
- Add the VAI Fly Neighborly logo to your website and online presence.
- Share Fly Neighborly principles with colleagues and subcontractors.
- Encourage pilots, operators, and maintenance staff to implement sound-abatement initiatives.

[verticalavi.org/
initiatives/
fly-neighborly](https://verticalavi.org/initiatives/fly-neighborly)



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