PDX Cargo Feeder Study Update – 2008
Recommendations and Status

Background
In 2005, a citizen committee was formed to identify strategies to reduce noise impacts on north and northeast Portland residents generated from regional cargo feeder and other small non-jet aircraft. In 2006, a second committee was formed to evaluate impacts on Vancouver neighborhoods from the same category of aircraft. Together, these committees developed a set of recommendations which were presented to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the Port of Portland and aircraft operators, proposing changes in the way these aircraft operate at Portland International Airport (PDX).

What exactly are cargo feeders?
Cargo feeders are small, propeller-driven planes that deliver overnight packages to and from PDX and Northwest regional airports. Cargo feeder activity at PDX has doubled over the past decade due to an increase in online shopping, next-day delivery, and what is known as "just-in-time" shipping. Cargo feeder flights account for about 10 percent of all PDX operations. Most cargo feeder flights occur on weekdays, with a limited number occurring on Saturdays. On the busiest weekday, PDX sees about 60 departures and 60 arrivals of these aircraft. Small single-engine aircraft (i.e. propeller airplanes) were also addressed within the study and recommendations.

Why are these aircraft such a concern?
These planes are smaller and slower than the larger jets which make up the majority of aircraft using PDX. FAA air traffic controllers separate them from jets and large turboprop aircraft by directing them to the crosswind runway and/or turning them away from the parallel runways as soon as possible after departure. These flights are often over residential neighborhoods at low altitudes. The Portland and Vancouver Regional Cargo Feeder Committees were formed to identify potential solutions for recommendation to the FAA, Port of Portland and operators.

Recommendations and status
The committee's work resulted in a number of recommendations. A summary of these recommendations and their current status are below:

Recommendations Implemented
(1) Route cargo feeders/light general aviation aircraft away from or higher over residential land uses: Operators are encouraged to fly over industrial or other non noise-sensitive areas whenever possible and, to remain as high as possible when over these residential communities. These messages will be reinforced through cargo feeder and general aviation outreach as part of the PDX Fly Quiet program, currently under development. This recommendation has been implemented through a new arrival procedure which allows inbound and outbound aircraft to maintain higher altitudes than they could previously. (Implemented Fall '07)

(2) Disperse cargo feeders/light general aviation aircraft: The committee recommended air traffic control reduce the concentrations of aircraft flying over specific communities. (Implemented August '07)

(3) Climb to 500 feet before turning from runway heading: This recommendation was adopted as company policy by cargo operators participating in the study. It will be published as an air traffic control instruction in the future. This recommendation is intended to increase the altitude of aircraft over the residential communities immediately after departure. (Implemented Summer '07)

(4) Discontinue intersection departures on Runway 21 (crosswind runway): This recommendation was adopted by cargo operators. The recommendation is intended to decrease the number of flights at lower altitudes over communities close in to the airport. (Implemented Winter '06)

(5) Cargo feeders use best noise abatement practices: Operators and air traffic control are made aware of community noise impacts and encouraged to use "best practices" for reducing noise when able. (Implemented Summer '07)

(6) Include cargo feeder/light general aviation pilot outreach program in PDX Fly Quiet program: Cargo feeder operators and general aviation have been incorporated into PDX Fly Quiet program plan. Additionally, targeted outreach is currently being developed. The Fly Quiet program being developed is designed to encourage participation in the PDX noise abatement program. (Implemented Summer '07)

(7) Raise the Runway 3 visual guidance (PAPI): This recommendation increases the altitude of aircraft when they are preparing for arrival at PDX via Runway 3. (Implemented April '08)

Phase II Recommendations
(1) Develop special Late Night Cargo Feeder and General Aviation (GA) Procedures: FAA will explore the potential for special nighttime procedures (for use from 11pm to 5am). This recommendation is awaiting the evaluation of the daytime procedural changes, described above. The recommendation is intended to direct aircraft to depart over the Columbia River (during nighttime hours).

(2) Extend hours of special late-night cargo feeder and general aviation procedures: The committee recommended expanding the hours of the nighttime procedures from 11pm-5am to 10pm–7am). This recommendation is on hold pending implementation of recommendation above.

(3) On departure, cargo feeders climb to 600 or 700 feet before turning: Pending review/analysis of impact of recommendation, "Climb to 500 feet before turning from runway heading."

Other Recommendations
Utilize larger aircraft: Fleet make-up is market-dependent. Operators utilize larger aircraft if/when the market demands it. For example, a single large aircraft can replace multiple smaller aircraft reducing the number of flights to and from PDX (and over noise-sensitive communities).

For more information

Please contact the Port of Portland Noise Management Department by calling (503) 460-4100 or (800) 938-6647 or visit us on the web at: www.portofportland.com.

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