



www.stopthechopnynj.org

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who is Stop the Chop NY/NJ and what is our mission? We are a 501c3 all-volunteer nonprofit organization with a mission to ban all nonessential helicopters from flying over the NY metropolitan area. As such, we support passing into law the Congressional bill H.R. 1643 (formerly H.R. 4880) “*The Improving Helicopter Safety Act of 2021*” introduced by NY Congressmembers Maloney, Nadler & Velazquez. See <https://stopthechopnynj.org/legislation/> We also support other relevant introduced federal bills: <https://stopthechopnynj.org/federal-legislation/>

Additionally, we seek the closure of the NYC owned heliports (E. 34th Street & Downtown Manhattan Heliport) to nonessential helicopter companies, as well as the NY Hudson River Park Trust owned heliport at W. 30th Street. We also support proposed local legislation (introduced by NYC, NY, & NJ legislators) to ban tourist helicopters, regulate helicopter traffic, collect data, and reduce helicopter noise levels.

What is deemed a “nonessential” helicopter? Nonessential helicopters are tourist, commuter, charter/corporate, and non-professional photographer.

What is NOT a nonessential helicopter? Military, emergency services, police, medical, government, news & media.

Why are STC NY/NJ & HR 1643 Congressional Sponsors trying to ban nonessential helicopters from the NY metro airspace? There are many reasons: *environmental* (they use excessive fossil fuel for small number of passengers); *safety* (high risks of crashes & already over 30 serious or deadly crashes in our densely populated area); *security* (risk of terrorist hijacking); *noise* (excessive noise pollution creates bodily & emotional harm, and reduces cognitive abilities); *economic* (reduces property values under flight paths, externalizes environmental pollution costs to society, medical visits due to crashes, noise exposure cost taxpayers, emergency services costs of crashes, lost worker productivity time due to noise & crashes).

How can one know what types of helicopters are flying overhead? Download the free app Flightradar24 – it tracks helicopter tail numbers, make & model, owners, flight paths, heliport departure & arrival locations, flight altitudes. You can screenshot that information and share photos on social media and helicopter complaint forms. Our website has a PDF that lists tail number owners and agencies flying those helicopters.

Why can’t helicopters fly higher to reduce noise? The FAA bans them from flying above 2,000 feet to prevent crashes with airplanes.

Is there a minimum height ban over land or buildings? No. In fact helicopters are often limited in how high they can fly because of the large number of commercial airplanes from LaGuardia, JFK, and Newark.

What are the nonessential helicopter companies currently flying over the NY metro area, and from where do they take off? There are basically 2 categories of nonessential helicopters: tourist & commuter. NYC based *tourist* helicopters are restricted to the Downtown Heliport. Corporate/charter flights operate out of all 3 heliports, but mainly use the East 34th and West 30th Street Heliports. Both tourists & commuters fly to and from Kearny and Linden NJ, Westchester County Airport, various airports in the Hamptons, and the Port Authority owned airports (LaGuardia, JFK, & Newark).

Where are the tourist helicopter companies based & where are they currently allowed to fly/tour/take aerial photos?

- In NYC, *tourist* helicopters are only allowed to fly from the Downtown Manhattan Heliport (M-Sat 9am-7pm only; Sundays no tourist flights are allowed) and those tourist flights are only allowed to fly over waterways (e.g., Hudson River, East River and NY Harbor). This is the result of the **2016 Agreement** between NYC and the helicopter industry; not an FAA rule. See <https://stopthechopnynj.org/local-legislation/>
- In NJ, *tourist* companies are based at two heliports: Linden (city owned) & Kearny (privately owned). FlyNYON (the doors off “shoe selfie” aerial photography company) is primarily based in Kearny, NJ. Because the FAA regulates airspace (and generally has preemption over local governments desiring to regulate air traffic), there are NO restrictions as to where they can fly (excluding TFRs – temporary flight restrictions).

Where are the NYC commuter/charter helicopter companies based & where are they currently allowed to fly on their commutes?

- Commuter/charter companies based in NYC fly out of all 3 heliports: Blade & others fly out of the W. 30th Street (M-Sun ●**hours appear unrestricted**), and the E. 34th Street (M-F 8am –8 pm) heliports. Fly Lindy & others are based at the Downtown Manhattan Heliport (M-F 7am-10pm, Sat 7am-7pm, Sun 7am-5pm)
- Commuters/charters can and do fly over land and parks, such as Central Park, Brooklyn Botanical Gardens, and residential neighborhoods.

Where do the commuter/charter helicopter companies fly to? Companies such as Blade fly to the 3 major NY/NJ airports, Westchester County Airport, Hamptons & other L.I. destinations. Fly Lindy, started in June 2021, will fly to Baltimore & DC. Private charters can fly to any destinations.

Why does STC NY/NJ need donations? We need funds to maintain our website, publish materials, produce hats, buttons, signs, and t-shirts. We also hope to fund research studies, and to hire part-time staff to assist with tech support, volunteer organizing, and marketing. We would like to be able to afford legal and/or lobbyist representation.

Aren't helicopters banned from flying over NYC land or on Sundays? The ban only applies to TOURIST helicopters originating from NYC. It does not apply to tourist flights from NJ or Westchester etc. or to any commuter/charter flights.

Why can't cities just ban them? The FAA prohibits localities from regulating their airspace. NYC can exert some control over its heliports, but even that may be limited by the FAA.

Why isn't Stop the Chop NY/NJ trying to ban NYPD or news helicopters? This would make our efforts to succeed politically impossible. These flights are a very small percentage of the number of helicopters over NYC each day. Media has 1st Amendment rights. We hope the news media will pool their helicopter video footage as the Manhattan Borough President "Helicopter Task Force" is encouraging. The NYPD can be regulated by the executive and legislative branches.

Aren't electric helicopters coming soon? Not so soon, as they have not been approved by the FAA. Even if they do receive approval, imagine flying vehicles noisier and larger than drones flying overhead. Safety & security risks remain.

What if helicopter noise does not bother you? Whether you realize it or not, your body evolved to respond to noises. Noise triggers a "flight or fright" response that releases harmful stress hormones and increases your blood pressure. Exposure to excessive noise has been linked to cardiac and endocrine disorders.

How can you help? 1) Sign up for our newsletter 2) Sign our petition 3) Volunteer to build our coalition, help us flyer & table 4) Donate \$ 5) Contact our electeds at all levels 6) Send in 311 & FAA Safety complaints once a week or once a month 7) Follow us on social media 8) Offer specialized skills towards us achieving our goals 9) Translate our materials in Mandarin, Cantonese, Spanish) 10) Outreach to organizations, schools, parents' groups, etc. 11) Spread the word!

Links to the above action steps are on our website: www.stopthechopnynj.org

Who do I contact to get involved: Email us at info@stopthechopnynj.org

NY Anti-Helicopter Advocacy Victories:

- 2021 - NYC stopped NYC & Company, NYC's tourist office, from promoting helicopter flights.
- 2016 - Stop the Chop NY/NJ and other advocates force a 50% reduction in number of tourist flights allowed from the Downtown Manhattan Heliport from 60,000 to 30,000, and eliminated Sunday tourist flights.
- 2016 - Helicopters are required to observe maximum idling times.
- 2012 - FAA mandates the NY North Shore Helicopter Route requiring over water route after political pressure.
- 2010 - Industry agrees that all tourist flights originating in Manhattan will not fly over Central Park, Governors Island, or Brooklyn. They will not do fly-bys of the Empire State Building.
- 2010 - Tourist flights are eliminated from East 30th Street Heliport.
- 2010 - No short (<20 minute) tourist flights allowed.
- 2005 lawsuit - Tourist flights are eliminated from West 30th Street Heliport.
- 1997 - East 34th Street Heliport eliminates all flights on Saturday or Sunday.
- 1997 - East 34th Street Heliport restricts hours of operation to 8am-8pm.
- 1997 - Mayor Giuliani closes East 60th Street Heliport.
- 1977 - Closed heliport on roof of Pan Am (Met Life) Building.

***** In 2003, Disney Corporation succeeded in getting Congress to pass a law establishing a 3-mile no-fly zone around Disney World and Disneyland. **NYC deserves no less!**