Foreign Military Aircraft Overflights and Landings: Legislation, policy, and statistics

The Air Navigation (Foreign Military Aircraft) Order, 1952 gives the Minister for Foreign Affairs primary responsibility for the regulation of activity by foreign military aircraft in Ireland and in Irish airspace.

The Order provides that no foreign military aircraft shall fly over, or land in, the State without the express invitation or permission of the Minister. It further provides that the aircraft shall comply with such stipulations as the Minister may make.

Requests for permission for foreign military aircraft to land in or overfly Ireland are routinely required to include confirmation that the aircraft meets specific criteria – namely, that the aircraft is unarmed; that it carries no arms, ammunition or explosives; and that it will not engage in intelligence gathering. Furthermore, applications must also specify that the flights do not form part of a military exercise or operation.

These conditions are applied to ensure compatibility with Ireland's traditional policy of military neutrality, which is characterised by non-membership of military alliances. This policy provides a context within which requests for permission to overfly, or land in, the State are considered by the Department of Foreign Affairs.

*In the case of US military aircraft, under the terms of a specific arrangement dating from 1959, overflights are permitted without prior notification, on condition that the aircraft are unarmed, carry only cargo and passengers, and comply with navigational requirements. If a proposed US military overflight does not meet these criteria, blanket clearance does not apply, and advance permission must be requested. The standard conditions would then apply. The US Embassy submits post-facto notifications of military aircraft overflights to the Department of Foreign Affairs on a monthly basis. Accordingly, the overflight figures for USA in the tables below are the total post-facto notifications of overflights and advance permissions for overflights.

Statistics for Overflights and Landings of Foreign Military Aircraft – February 2024

Country	Landing Requests Received	Landing Requests Cancelled	Landing Requests Refused	Overflight Requests Received	Overflight Requests Cancelled	Overflight Requests Refused
Algeria	2	0	0	0	0	0
Austria	1	0	0	0	0	0
Azerbaijan	1	0	0	0	0	0
Canada	3	1	0	3	0	0
France	5	0	0	7	2	0
Germany	2	0	0	14	4	0
Greece	0	0	0	2	0	0
Hungary	0	0	0	4	0	0
Italy	1	0	0	1	0	0
Jordan	0	0	0	1	0	0
Netherlands	0	0	0	6	0	0
Slovak Republic	1	0	0	2	1	0
Switzerland	0	0	0	2	2	0
Turkiye	0	0	0	1	0	0
United States	31	3	0	***36**	0	0
Total	**47**	**4**	**0**	**79**	**9**	**0**

Statistics for Landings of Foreign Military Aircraft listed by Airport of Landing – February 2024

Country	Shannon	Dublin	Cork	Cancelled	Total no. of Landings
Algeria	0	2	0	0	2
Austria	0	0	1	0	1
Azerbaijan	0	1	0	0	1
Canada	3	0	0	1 x Shannon	2
France	2	3	0	0	5
Germany	0	2	0	0	2
Italy	1	0	0	0	1
Slovak Rep	0	1	0	0	1
United States	31	0	0	3 x Shannon	28
Total	**37**	**9**	**1**	**4**	**43**