

TRACON Tour
September 18, 2012
Questions/Answers

Q1: For arrivals into ORD, does TRACON determine final approach runway?

A1: The tower selects the runways to be used based on wind, weather and other considerations. The TRACON will then assign the runway to the aircraft when they first call the Approach Controller. The assigned runway is based on traffic and flows at the TRACON.

Q2: If pilot requests arrival runway change and it's granted, is that something ORD Tower handles?

A2: Runway changes normally are handled by the TRACON. Once the aircraft is 5 miles from ORD a runway change is too complex if there is other traffic, the tower would switch the aircraft back to the TRACON to be re-sequenced.

Q3: For flights from the western US that do not land on the western side of the airport but rather continue on over the lake and then back in from the east, does TRACON route the aircraft around ORD, or does the ORD Tower do that once the aircraft reaches ORD Tower airspace control on the west side of the airport?

A3: The TRACON is responsible to sequence the aircraft. When an aircraft coming from the west is landing to the west that is due to the runway availability, winds, weather, etc.

Q4: Is Tracon as knowledgeable about and as committed to Fly Quiet as ORD Tower is?

A4: The TRACON is as knowledgeable and committed to the Fly Quiet as the tower. Safety, as always, would be a factor that would void the Fly Quiet.

Q5: NextGen is committed to the most direct path/shortest flying time routing to save fuel burn and reduce costs to the airlines - landing a plane on the east side of the airport that could have landed on the west side adds 10 to 15 minutes of flying time and fuel burn to that flight - is TRACON aware of this, especially during the low traffic Fly Quiet period?

A5: Even with NextGen, runway selection is heavily based on wind. Aircraft need to operate, landing and departing, into the wind as much as possible.

Q6: Why aren't 9 Right and 14 Left used more for arrivals, especially late night/early morning?

A6: Runways are selected based on winds and availability. The City normally closes some of the runways at night for their maintenance purposes.