

## **Heartland 101: Online Tool Shows Noise Levels in Region**

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Access to the internet and Google Earth are the two things needed to view noise levels from facilities in Alberta's Industrial Heartland. Released this past October, a new online tool uses Google Earth to allow anyone to view noise levels in the region.

The new Google Earth tool is part of a first-in-the-world plan to manage noise on a regional basis. It's taken a few years to fully develop and launch the online tool. [Now live](#), it is used by anyone around the globe curious about noise levels, including industrial facilities in the Heartland to view their own noise outputs on the region.

### **Part of a Noise Management Plan**

The Google Earth tool is part of the Regional Noise Management Plan. It was created by the 25 member facilities of the Northeast Capital Industrial Association (NCIA) in partnership with the Alberta Energy Regulator and the Alberta Utilities Commission.

The plan helps ensure best practices when managing environmental noise from facilities in the Heartland. It's important to note that the plan does not manage environmental noise impacts from mainline road traffic or mainline rail traffic.

### **Noise Management in Action**

Participating industrial facilities worked with a noise consultant to develop a noise model for their particular site. Those site noise models were combined into one model for the entire region to show the combined cumulative noise footprint of all participating companies.

This regional model has the ability to predict noise levels in the region up to 5 kilometers from a noise source (industrial facility). Each year, the accuracy of the regional model is evaluated by conducting 24 hour noise measurements at 12 pre-selected locations in the region.

### **Using the Google Earth Platform**

- Anyone with the Google Earth program on their computer can view satellite imagery, maps, terrain and buildings anywhere in the world.
- The NCIA Google Earth Platform shows the regional noise model outputs, for calm wind conditions, and allows users to zoom in or out of specific locations.
- The platform includes the following layers that can be turned on or off by the user:
  - Calm wind cumulative noise outputs for participating companies (regional basis)
  - Mainline road traffic noise levels (based on information from the province)
  - Mainline rail traffic noise levels (based on estimated information)

The [Google Earth noise tool](#) and other information about noise management and industrial operations are available at [www.ncia.ab.ca](http://www.ncia.ab.ca).

For more information about Life in the Heartland, visit [lifeintheheartland.com](http://lifeintheheartland.com), follow us on Twitter and Facebook, or email [info@lifeintheheartland.com](mailto:info@lifeintheheartland.com).

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*Heartland 101 is a monthly print and on-air (Mix 107.9 FM) series brought to you by **Life in the Heartland**, a partnership of five local organizations improving access to information, resources, and contacts for communities in and around Alberta's Industrial Heartland.*