



# Spotter Guide to

# Boeing Field / King County International Airport (BFI/KBFI)

Photos: Andreas Mowinckel

## Frequencies

### Tower

- 118.30 Local East / RWY 13L/31R
- 120.60 Local West / RWY 13R/31L
- 124.40 IFR non-jet departures
- 126.55 IFR non-jet departures
- 257.80 Tower
- 121.90 Ground
- 118.90 Clearance Delivery
- 132.40 Clearance Delivery
- 127.75 ATIS
- 154.34 Boeing Field Fire Dept
- 155.805 King County (Boeing Field Security)

### Approach control

- 119.20 / 284.70
- 120.10 / 290.90
- 120.40 / 269.13
- 125.60 / 273.45

- 125.90 / 290.90, 338.20
- 126.50 / 391.90

### Company frequencies

- 122.95 UNICOM
- 122.50 Flight Service Station
- 123.65 Flight Service Station
- 131.750 Aeroflight
- 131.00 Airborne Express/DHL Maintenance
- 131.025 Clay Lacy
- 122.950 Galvin Flying Service
- 129.025 Galvin Flying Service
- 129.425 UPS United Parcel Service

## Boeing test frequencies

### VHF

- |         |         |         |
|---------|---------|---------|
| 123.150 | 123.225 | 123.250 |
| 123.275 | 123.325 | 123.350 |
| 123.425 | 123.475 | 123.550 |
| 149.900 |         |         |

### UHF

- |         |         |         |
|---------|---------|---------|
| 227800  | 239.900 | 252.200 |
| 266.400 | 287.200 | 291.800 |
| 292.100 | 299.950 | 315.000 |
| 341.600 | 349.600 | 361.500 |
| 363.350 | 384.500 | 397.100 |

### HF

- |       |       |       |
|-------|-------|-------|
| 2851  | 3443  | 4050  |
| 5451  | 5775  | 6550  |
| 8822  | 10045 | 10250 |
| 11306 | 13312 | 15516 |
| 26635 | 29905 |       |

## Spotter sites

Boeing Field / King County International Airport is the home of Boeing and the Museum of Flight. The airport has two parallel runways - one for small aircraft and one long for the large Boeing aircraft.

### A Airport Business Park

The parking lot gives good views across the field to where some of the business jets park. This site also gives good views for arriving and departing traffic landing from the South. For photography, afternoon hours are best. A pickup truck or a ladder is recommended, due to high fences.

### B Museum of Flight

Excellent view from inside the Museum's 'Control Tower'. The parking lot also have good spotting opportunities. For photography, afternoon hours are best.

### C Boeing apron south

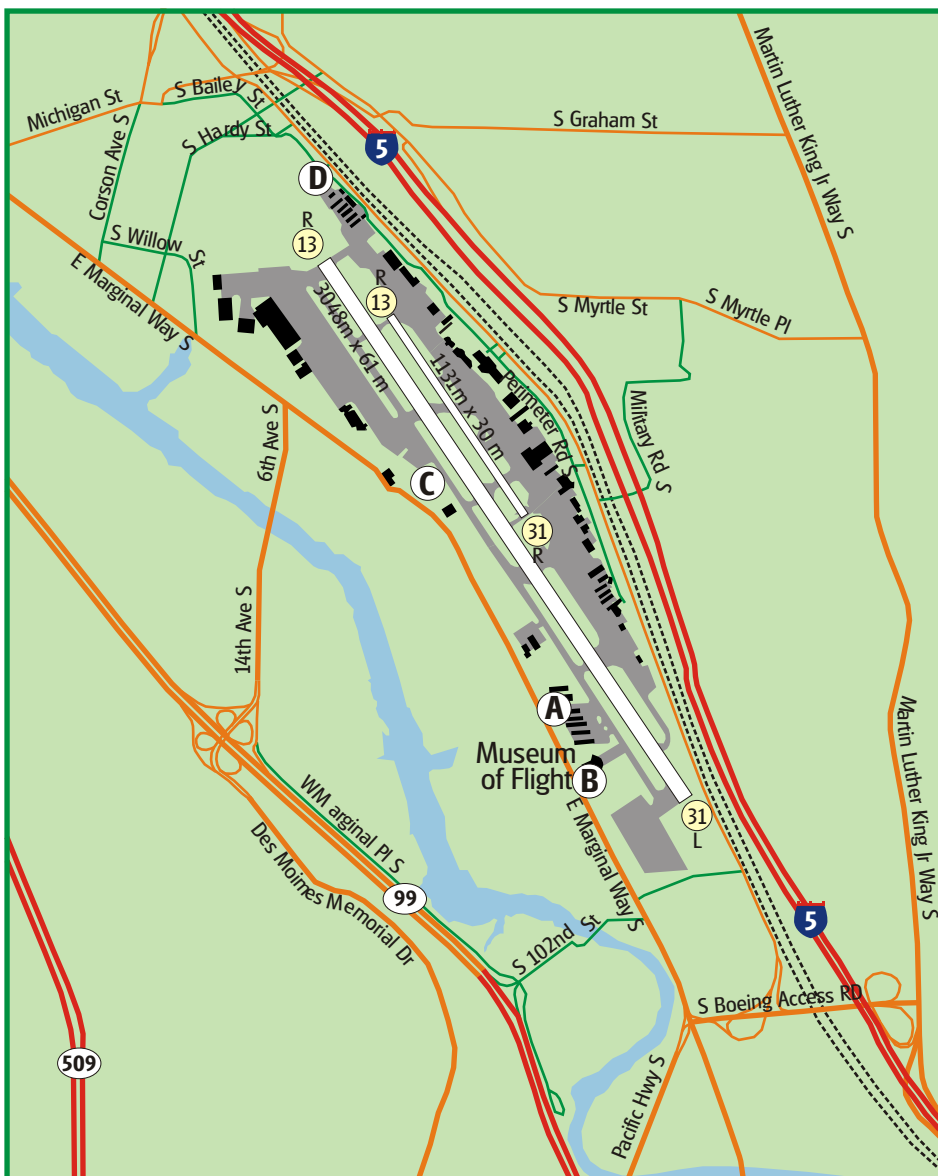
This is where the new Boeing's normally turn into the parking area. Offers excellent view of taxing aircraft, but with somewhat restricted view of the runway. No parking available in this area (nearest is at the Boeing store), and photography is limited to through the fence.

### D North End

Gives good view of final approach when traffic arrives from the North. Somewhat limited photo opportunities for departing traffic.

### Other locations

- BFI Airport Terminal: Espresso bar and clear windows give OK view of the runway.
- There are several parking lots on both sides of the field that offer good view of arriving and departing traffic.
- If 31L is in use, morning traffic is best viewed along the fence by Airport Way.



## Spotting at Boeing Field:

### Do's & Don'ts

Planespotting/aviation photography has become quite popular in recent years. (No thanks to Anet ;) ) Seeing as Boeing Field has become a bit of a destination for spotters the world over, we (locals) are seeing a lot of new faces by the fence. We have also created relationships with local authorities and private business owners in respect to our hobby. Unfortunately, like a lot of other airports, we see a lot of behavior that could put our good-faith relationships with these groups at risk. As we all know, our pastime has become complicated after the events of 9/11 and have witnessed the closing and/or restriction of very good locations for various reasons. Security is most often the reason given, but in truth, sometimes it simply the unwillingness to monitor those that cannot monitor themselves. So... in hopes of enhancing people's visits to our local digs, a few of us locals have put together this short guide to BFI.

### Ruby Chow Park:

On the far north end of King County Airport property. Looks straight down RWY 13R. There is ample parking and, as the name implies, a small grass park with a few picnic benches. There is also a great berm that can get you elevated up high enough to see over the fence.

#### DOs:

Parking is public. Bring a scanner as it's difficult to see the approach until the aircraft is right overhead.

#### DON'Ts:

None really.

### Midfield Park:

Directly below and to the South of the ATC tower. This is the 50 yd line of 13R/31L. Good for rotation and braking shots. It's basically a former Boeing parking lot so there is TONS of parking. (Unless it's a special event like Blue Angels.)

#### DOs:

Bring a ladder. The fence is high.

#### DON'Ts:

There is a perimeter gate to airside here. Don't block the passage of vehicles here. Don't run up to the open gate to get a clear shot. It makes everyone nervous. And don't loiter by the gate or keypad.

Do your best to NOT shoot photos of private aircraft at the Clay Lacy Aviation ramp, directly across from Midfield. Lacy clients pay good money for VIP service and there have been some concerns with privacy issues in regards to this. As a general rule, I try not to shoot anyone's workplace. Yes... it's well within your legal rights to shoot that ramp from Midfield. But it's not very respectful. And, more importantly, could jeopardize Midfield as a public park. It would take very little to close Midfield to the public. Especially if a very influential BFI tenant feels his clients are

uncomfortable with having their photos taken. (If you catch my drift.)

### Area 31:

If you know where this spot is... good for you. I am not telling you. Why? Because it's private property. Granted, it's a publicly accessible parking lot so it doesn't involve dodging poison darts or rolling boulders to get to. Should you find this spot, here are "the rules." We'd appreciate if you'd respect them.

#### DOs:

Have fun. A scanner and binoculars are recommended.

#### DON'Ts:

- A big-rig leasing company often parks their rigs here. DO NOT CLIMB ON THE TRAILERS OR TRUCKS. This alone is the biggest risk to this spot. Should the tenants see us climbing on their private property in a way that we could potentially fall and get hurt, they will most likely do what they can to remove us. Remember... this is about liability and lawsuits. They won't want to risk it. Just bring a ladder or park near the South end. There's a clear angle over the fence so there's no excuse.

- Don't litter. This may sound like a no-brainer, but a lot of people come here to eat lunch and watch traffic. Take what you bring. The tenants here don't want to have to clean up your Jack-in-the-Box crap.

### Museum of Flight Parking:

One of the Museums' taglines is "Everyday is an Airshow." And it's true. There's always lots of interesting traffic at BFI. It's also one of the few places you can spot stress-free. There's two distinct locations at the MOF. The parking lot and the Control Tower Exhibit. The parking lot is pretty self-explanatory. You'll need a ladder or shoot through the fence. The ATC exhibit is inside the Museum, so you'll have to pay admission. (Or become a member for free entry for a year.) The pros of the exhibit are that they pipe in ATC chatter and there are small bleachers to sit on. The view is EXCELLENT. The cons are you'll have to tolerate screaming children banging on all the interactive exhibits throughout the day.

#### DOs:

Visit the Museum. (Duh.) The collection is amazing.

#### DON'Ts:

Try your best to not shoot to the South, towards the Boeing military ramp. Makes them jumpy. Granted, they wouldn't put anything top-secret next to an aviation museum, but still. Besides, the only interesting thing over there is N757A and that's been shot more than Tupac.

### Airport Way S.:

This is the road that runs parallel to the runway to the East of the field. There is a long stretch of fence by the threshold of 31L. King County police generally frown on people parking there to shoot for EXTENDED periods of time. Though it really is a case-by-case situation. Again, it also depends on your behavior. If you see

something interesting taking off or landing, park and shoot. Just don't camp. The only time this does not apply is during special events like the Blues or the arrival of special aircraft (AF1, Concorde, etc...) Then it's LINED with people. Bring a cooler then.

#### DOs:

Shoot through the fence. Ladders here make everyone nervous and chances are a "concerned citizen" will get on the cell phone and get you your very own personal field interview from some a pair of mirrored sunglasses.

#### DON'Ts:

Back up to the fence with your vehicle and lean/climb on the fence. And don't litter. It can become FOD and NOT appreciated by ANYONE.

### King County Airport Terminal

This is on Airport Way S.

#### DOs:

None really.

#### DON'Ts:

The usual airport rules apply. Don't shoot security. Respect the privacy of passengers, tenants and aviators.

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That's about it. All this seems pretty common sense... but you'd be surprised. BFI is a unique airport and we are lucky to have the access we do. Let's not screw it up. We know how easy it is for airport authorities to clamp down.

The good news is King County Police "know" what planespotting is. They deal with it all the time. I have had conversations with several officers and much to my surprise, they don't really have a problem with ladders near the fence, but again, do so respectfully and make it clear you're doing so for vantage point reasons and not to scale the fence.

Come to Seattle. Enjoy yourself. But be respectful to the locals who have forged these good-faith understandings. Have fun, but respect property rights.

Should anyone local or airside want to add to this thread, please do.

And if you'd rather be anonymous, feel free to e-mail me comments and I will post.

Regards,

#### A Small Contingency of the SEA Group

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**Note:** We are not representatives of any airport authority or police organization. All views and opinions mentioned above are our own and not intended to be those of said authorities.