

CertAlert

DOT/Federal Aviation Administration, Southern Region Airports Division,
Airport Certification Safety Team, P.O. Box 20636, ASO-620, Atlanta, Georgia 30320
(404) 305-6700 (404) 305-6730 FAX

Issued February 4, 2004

Number SO-04-06

This bulletin pertains to:

All Part 139 Airports (ATTN: Airport Operators and ARFF Departments)

Ref: Vehicle Deviations

Special Safety Alert for FAR Part 139 Airports

There have been two ARFF vehicles involved in vehicle deviations at two different airports this week. Since October 2003, there have been 19 separate incidents and we are concerned about the increasing numbers of incidents between vehicles and aircraft. Fortunately, none of these incidents have led to an accident but we have come too close too many times. We all must do whatever we can to prevent runway incursions.

One problem that has been identified in several recent incidents has been miscommunications between airport vehicles and the air traffic control tower. In several incidents, either the communications were misunderstood or one party failed to hear what the other had said. Always ensure that you know what the ATCT has directed and always ensure that the ATCT understands where you are and what you want. When operating on the airport, the ultimate responsibility is yours. Make sure your communications are clear and completely understood.

To help you, here are a few additional helpful hints.

- Know your airport. If you are not sure where to go or how to get to another location, ask for progressive instructions from the controller.
- Always check your radio to make sure it works properly before entering the movement area.
- Always “read back” hold short instructions.
- If you don’t understand the communication from the tower, ask them to repeat it.
- If you are not sure what the controller said, verify it with them.
- As pilots say, ‘keep your head on a swivel’. Be aware of your surroundings and watch for aircraft. Listening to other radio transmissions will help you maintain situational awareness.
- Before driving, review the airport’s rules and regulations for driving on the movement area.

We encourage you to bring this to the attention of your staff **today**. Everyone should be reminded to pay special attention while driving on movement areas. A simple reminder could prevent a disastrous event at your airport.

If you have any questions, need assistance or Runway Safety materials, etc., please feel free to call your Airport Certification Safety Inspector.

Linda Berkowitz,
Team Leader,
Airport Certification and Safety, FAA Southern Region