

CertAlert

DOT/Federal Aviation Administration, Southern Region Airports Division,
Airport Certification Safety Team, P.O. Box 20636, Atlanta, Georgia 30320-0631
(404) 305-6700; FAX: (404) 305-6730

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This CertAlert pertains to:
All Southern Region Airports

Reduce runway incursions, surface incidents!

We need your immediate support in enhancing surface safety and awareness to reduce the high number of runway incursions and surface incidents that are taking place at Southern Region airports.

Southern Region RIs year-to-date FY 2007 versus equivalent period FY 2006

RI Type	FY2007 (thru 8/08)	FY2006 (thru 8/08)
OE/D	18	20
PD	45	26
V/PD	9	4
Total	72	50

Legend:

OE/D: Operational Error/Deviation (Air Traffic Controllers)

PD: Pilot Deviation

V/PD: Vehicle/Pedestrian Deviation

RI: Runway Incursion

FY: Fiscal Year (begins October 1st)

Not included in this table are 28 Surface Incidents caused by Vehicles and Pedestrians. Surface Incidents occur when vehicles or persons access the Airport Movement Area without Air Traffic Control Authorization. Although these were not incursions, the potential was there. The frequency of Runway Incursions and Surface Incidents at Southern Region airports has significantly increased, especially among vehicle operators and pilots.

The following is a synopsis of four Vehicle/Pedestrian Deviations (incursions and incidents) that have occurred during Fiscal Year 2007 at Southern Region Airports. Please share these scenarios with your staff and tenants to increase awareness and help eliminate these events.

- **Runway Incursion:**

Runway 9L-27R was scheduled to be closed for maintenance (NOTAM issued). At the scheduled time, Airport Operations assumed the runway was closed, however, Air Traffic Control, did not officially close the runway and was waiting for the airport to announce the closure. An airport operations vehicle was located at the departure end of the runway and was surprised to see an aircraft take-off on what they thought was a

closed runway.

Causal Factors: Poor/improper coordination between the airport operator and air traffic control tower.

Preventive Factors: Airport operators should verify that Air Traffic Control is aware of changes to open/close airport movement areas. This should be confirmed on frequency before the vehicles go out on the airfield to physically close (with barricades) the unavailable area, whether it is a runway or taxiway. Do not rely on the date/time of the NOTAM to “assume” that the area is closed.

- **Surface Incident:**

Air traffic control personnel observed a vehicle proceeding westbound on Taxiway Foxtrot and crossed Runway 32 without authorization. Airport police apprehended the driver shortly, thereafter. No aircraft were involved. Further investigation revealed that the driver worked for a catering company and was covering a delivery for another employee. They were granted access to the airfield through one of the private hangar gates by one of the airport tenants who assumed the driver knew where she was going. The driver passed the hanger she was supposed to make the deliver to and ended up crossing the runway. Although the catering company's policy includes driver training for all personnel who conduct deliveries, this driver did not receive any training, since it was a last minute delivery change .

Causal Factors: Insufficient airfield access/escort procedures by airfield tenant.

Preventive Factors: This has happened at several airports throughout the region for many of the same reasons. Airport Operators should notify tenants about the possible safety and security concerns of letting unauthorized persons through the gates. Penalties should be established and enforced for all violations. If possible, delivery vehicles should not be allowed onto the airfield unless escorted by a trained/qualified individual.

- **Surface Incident:**

Aircraft rescue and firefighting vehicles were dispatched, by the Air Traffic Control Tower, to respond to an aircraft inbound with an emergency. The aircraft had previously departed and was now returning to Runway 23, about 12 miles out, when the rescue equipment was in place (rescue 1 and rescue 2). Before the arrival of the emergency aircraft, a second aircraft had already been cleared to land on Runway 23. When this aircraft touched-down, the rescue equipment believed it to be the emergency aircraft and began following it down the runway, without Air Traffic Control authorization. To complicate matters, the Air Traffic Control Tower could not get in contact with either rescue vehicle. Therefore, the emergency aircraft was forced to do a go-around, due to the vehicles being on the runway. The emergency aircraft performed a 360-degree turn and landed safety on another runway.

Causal Factors: Driver’s training/ aircraft familiarization lacking. Airport Standard Operating Procedures not followed.

Preventive Factors: The Airport Fire Department and Air Traffic Control Tower should

review the airport's Standard Operating Procedures (for emergencies) at least on an annual basis, in addition to the Airport Emergency Plan review. Everyone should be on the same page and know what to expect. Airports should consider running several practice response drills throughout the year. Training, training, training, cannot be emphasized enough.

- **Runway Incursion:**

A tug driver requested clearance from Air Traffic Control to relocate an aircraft. The ground controller approved the request and instructed the tug to remain clear of the Runway. The tug driver read-back, "remain clear of the runway". Later, the ground controller noticed the tug cross the runway while an aircraft was on short final and told the local controller to send the aircraft around. The aircraft went around and circled back to land without incident.

Causal Factors: Vehicle Driver's lack of situational awareness and training.

Preventive Factors: Airports should oversee the driver training of all personnel who have driving privileges on, or with access to, the movement area, including tenants. If a tenant is responsible for training its own employees, the airport should audit the training program regularly to ensure it is adequate.

Complacency, inattentiveness, and lack of knowledge or experience are some of the major causal factors for runway incursions.

Help prevent runway incursions and surface incidents:

- Support runway safety education
- Provide comprehensive training programs and review them regularly for improvement
- Participate in and/or sponsor safety forums/seminars that are held in your area

If you have any safety concerns, recommendations and/or input, feel free to contact the FAA Southern Region Airports Division.

Your Airport Certification & Safety Team

Linda Berkowitz, Team Leader
Jack McSwain
Jim Price
Randy Moseng
Patrick Rogers

Robert B. Chapman
Airports Division Manager, FAA Southern Region

Jim Castleberry
Manager, Regional Programs