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InFO

Information for Operators

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http://www.faa.gov/other_visit/aviation_industry/airline_operators/airline_safety/info

An InFO contains valuable information for operators that should help them meet certain administrative, regulatory, or operational requirements with relatively low urgency or impact on safety.

Subject: Taxi Clearances: Know the Rules, Understand Your Clearance

Purpose: This InFO identifies Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations regarding taxi clearances and emphasizes the meaning of certain taxi clearances issued by air traffic controllers (ATC).

Background: Inadvertent blunders onto active runways (runway incursions) are among the most persistent hazards in civil aviation. Awareness of pertinent FAA regulations and a clear understanding of every taxi clearance are essential defenses for pilots against those blunders.

Discussion: FAA regulations on taxi clearances are clear:

A clearance to “taxi to” the takeoff runway assigned to the aircraft is not a clearance to cross that assigned takeoff runway, or to taxi on that runway at any point, but is a clearance to cross other runways that intersect the taxi route to that assigned takeoff runway. (Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) § 91.129(i))

Taxi clearances issued by ground control reflect the regulations. For example:

[Any airline] 567, taxi runway 9L; depart the ramp via taxiway Alpha 1.

This taxi clearance gives the pilot discretion to taxi to runway 9L by any route with two restrictions: (1) to depart the ramp only via taxiway Alpha 1; and (2) *not* to cross runway 9L in the process of taxiing to the hold-short position (14 CFR § 91.129(i)).

FAA guidance supplements that regulation with the following:

- AC 120-51E, Crew Resource Management Training
- AC 120-71A, Standard Operating Procedures for Flight Deck Crewmembers
- AC 120-74A, Parts 91, 121, 125 and 135 Flight Crew Procedures During Taxi Operations
http://www.airweb.faa.gov/Regulatory_and_Guidance_Library/rgAdvisoryCircular.nsf/MaInFrame?OpenFrameSet

- SAFO 06013, Flight crew techniques and procedures that enhance pre-takeoff and takeoff safety
http://www.faa.gov/other_visit/aviation_industry/airline_operators/airline_safety/safo/
- Information for Pilots, from the FAA's Office of Runway Safety
<http://www.faa.gov/runwaysafety/cockpit.cfm>

Recommended Action: Directors of safety, directors of operations, trainers, and pilots should clearly understand regulations regarding taxi clearances and the meaning of taxi clearances issued by ground controllers. Further, they should understand the meaning of signs, markings, and lighting such as runway guard lights (“wig-wag lights”) designed to alert pilots that they are approaching an active runway. And finally, they should understand that a pilot may call upon ATC (ground control) for help before taxiing or at any time while taxiing.

Directors of safety, directors of operations, trainers, and pilots should consider making the content of this InFO a permanent feature of their standard operating procedures and their training.