



Vanquishing the V/PD

2nd Quarter 2012

A quarterly publication from the
Safety Section

Federal Aviation Administration Airports Division
Western-Pacific Region



This publication is directed primarily towards airport management to be disseminated to all levels of personnel working at your airfield. It does not matter how large or how small your airfield or how tight your budget may be, this information must be made available to your people by whatever means. Vanquishing the V/PD can be accomplished through a solid partnership between the FAA and airport management. The responsibility of making sure that the proper safeguards are in place; however, lies squarely on the shoulders of the airport management. Please use this information and all that follows as a guide by which to produce a safer environment at your airfield.

In the calendar year of 2011 FAAs Western-Pacific Region (AWP) experienced a spike in Vehicle/Pedestrian Deviations (V/PDs) involving flight instructors who were soloing student pilots. Most of these V/PDs involved flight instructors who entered or exited aircraft while on an active taxiway or elsewhere in the movement area. Airport operators, fixed base operators (FBOs) and flight instructors should all understand and follow certain guidelines when a student pilot is ready to solo:

- Airport operators should consider providing a “solo bench” for flight instructors that is located well clear of the movement area.
- If a “solo bench” is provided by the airport, its use should be restricted to flight instructors only. Airport visitors viewing airport activity should not use the bench.
- Airport operators should communicate a “best practices” policy to FBOs regarding the soloing of student pilots.

- Flight instructors must understand that exiting and entering an aircraft in the movement area is prohibited unless approved by the air traffic control tower (ATCT).
- Flight instructors must locate, identify and understand the significance of the non-movement area boundary marking.
- Flight instructors must understand that their actions, good and bad, are an example that their students will emulate in their future flying.
- Flight instructors are encouraged to utilize a hand held VHF communication radio to monitor their student's solo and to communicate with the ATCT if necessary.
- If a hand held radio is not available, flight instructors are encouraged to have the telephone number of the ATCT programmed into their cell phone in case communications with the ATCT becomes necessary.

FAAs National Office of Runway Safety offers a great deal of educational information for pilots, controllers and vehicle drivers on their website:

http://www.faa.gov/airports/runway_safety/

Additional information is available on the Western-Pacific Region Office of Runway Safety website:

http://www.faa.gov/airports/runway_safety/awp/

A student solo is an occasion that is forever remembered by the student pilot as well as the flight instructor. Exercise caution to be certain that this occasion is not remembered for the wrong reasons.

Column written by:

Steven Oetzell

Lead Airport Certification Safety Inspector, AWP-620.6

Reproductions of this, past and subsequent issues of Vanquishing the VPD are available on FAA Website:

<http://www.faa.gov/airports/western%5Fpacific/airports%5Fresources/newsletter/>