



**FAA**  
**Great Lakes Region, Airports Division**  
**Safety Standards Branch**

**Airport Certification Information Bulletin (ACIB) 2011-4**

**Best Practices for Winter Operations**

<p><b>Situational Awareness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training should address equipment operations during low visibility conditions.</li> <li>• Develop procedures to cease snow removal during periods of severely restricted visibility.</li> <li>• Keep current airport diagrams in the vehicle.</li> <li>• Consider the negative effects of fatigue on driver performance.</li> <li>• Minimize distractions: Prohibit use of cell phones and minimize use of radio equipment.</li> <li>• Ensure that all airfield signs (especially hold signs) are clearly visible and operational.</li> <li>• Ensure appropriate NOTAMs are in place to identify obscured and/or inoperative signs.</li> </ul>		<p><b>Communications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate on local control frequency while operating on active runways.</li> <li>• Communicate intentions, readback clearances, and call clear as required.</li> <li>• Use proper phraseology.</li> <li>• Periodically check in with ATC to confirm clearances, intentions, and traffic.</li> <li>• At uncontrolled fields, continually self-announce positions and intentions.</li> <li>• <i>If in doubt... ASK!</i></li> </ul>
	<p><b>Operational Safety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close runways when snow removal operations will be conducted for extended periods.</li> <li>• Communicate airfield conditions to the ATCT, users, and tenants via timely and accurate airfield condition reports.</li> <li>• Update any change in conditions, particularly when they are changing rapidly.</li> <li>• Issue and update NOTAMs as appropriate.</li> <li>• Maintain all operational surfaces to no worse than wet conditions whenever possible.</li> <li>• Nil braking is an unsafe condition. Close the runway immediately until improved conditions can be verified.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Vehicle Lighting &amp; Visibility</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use all available lighting equipment.</li> </ul>

**Subject: Runway Safety Best Practices During Winter Operations**

Many airports in the Great Lakes Region have experienced abnormally high snowfalls and unusually adverse weather conditions this winter. Managing these snow events has resulted in more snow removal equipment operations on airport movement areas. Along with this increase in snow removal activity, we have experienced a number of runway incursions involving all types of snow removal equipment.

In the past 60 days, we have recorded seven vehicle deviations on airports in the Great Lakes Region. Of these, three involved snow removal operations. Six of these have been classified as runway incursions. While any surface incident could result in an accident, runway incursions provide the greatest risk of a ground collision.

We see one common denominator in nearly all incidents involving snow removal operations. Please do not underestimate the importance of maintaining situational awareness while operating on the airfield at all times. Weather conditions, fatigue, and other factors can play a role in distracting vehicle operators. It is important to place extra emphasis on the location of visual aids, pavement markings, signs, and other geographic landmarks that can help drivers always know exactly where they are. There's no room for complacency, and remember...

***“If in doubt... ask.”***

**Attachment:**

[Winter Operations Poster](#)