

CertAlert

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Marking and Lighting of Closed Runways

We receive many questions regarding the Southern Region policy for marking and lighting closed runways. Our original policy, dated January 21, 1997, is very brief and does not address various questions. This CertAlert covers some of the situations that may take place at your airport.

A lighted "X" is required when a runway is temporarily closed for maintenance, construction, or an aircraft incident during darkness or low visibility if the runway lights are on during the closure. The specific requirement is in Sections 341(a)(1)(i) and 341(b) of [14 C.F.R. Part 139](#).

An "X" is required any time the runway is officially closed, and a NOTAM is issued, regardless of the duration of the closure. If the runway is not officially closed there may be situations when the Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT) agrees to work with airport management regarding airport maintenance crews conducting work on or near the runway (in the runway safety area) for short periods of time. This operation should be conducted in accordance with the airport owner's "ground vehicle rules and regulations." During these short periods of time, the ATCT may ask the vehicles and personnel to exit the runway for approaching or departing aircraft.

A lighted "X" is required in darkness or low visibility conditions. However, if the runway is closed by a NOTAM and the runway lights and approach lights are off, an "X" is not required. A lighted "X" shall be used at night when a runway is closed and when any runway lights or approach lights are on for that runway.

In either of the two above cases, an "X" is required at both ends of the runway if the runway is officially closed. If there is a disabled aircraft on one end of the runway, it may not be necessary to put an "X" at that end. Advisory Circular, Operational Safety On Airports During Construction, AC 150/5370-2, gives guidance regarding the placement of the "X".

If you have any questions, please contact your Airport Certification Safety Inspector.

-- From your Safety Certification Team, FAA Southern Region