

Snow Removal Plans: The prioritization of contamination removal and treatment should focus on the primary runway (s) and associated taxiway turnoffs. As nine of these sixteen incidents indicate, it is very important that the runway turnoffs be maintained to the same level as the primary runway surface for safety. Airplanes typically have better straight-ahead stopping capability than they do cornering capability on contaminated surfaces, thus the increased incident rate on the runway turnoffs. Additionally, priority should be given to primary taxi routes to and from the primary runway and the ramp area. All runways and taxiways that are considered open for operations should have markings and signage clearly visible from the aircraft type likely to utilize that surface, including pavement boundary markings. Ramp surface areas within the responsibility of the airport authority should be maintained in an operable safe condition for both aircraft and service vehicles.

Communicating Airport Surface Condition Information: Safe aircraft operations depend on timely and accurate surface condition information. The current NOTAM system does not lend itself to accurate and timely dissemination of airport surface condition information. Under some circumstances, these limits prevent the airport operator from accurately portraying the airport surface conditions. If the system prevents the accurate portrayal of the surface condition information, and or its timely dissemination, the current surface conditions should be provided to ATC and all available airport users in plain language by the most expeditious means available. The airport operator needs to be mindful that they are the most knowledgeable of the actual surface conditions. It is imperative that flight crews have surface condition information in accurate terms and a timely manner in order to base their operational decisions.

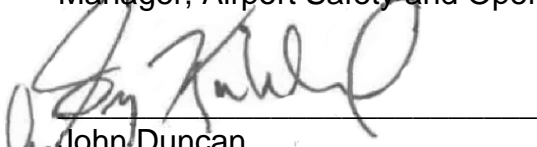
For example, some of the referenced incidents indicate that the current FAA guidance for the use of the term "Patchy" may be misleading and misunderstood by airport users. Current guidance considers a "Patchy" condition to exist anytime the surface is covered by less than 100% of the contaminate. New airport surface condition reporting terminology is being developed by a joint FAA/Industry group. However until the new guidance is completed and published, the FAA is directing that only contaminate conditions that cover 25% or less of the cleared/treated/usable surface be classified as "Patchy." Conditions covering more than 25% should be considered as covering the total surface area for surface condition reporting purposes. This breakdown will match the breakdown provided to airplane operators by the aircraft manufacturers for performance on contaminated surfaces.

Airport Surface Area Closure: As prescribed in Cert Alert 09-03, airport operators must close a runway upon the receipt of a nil braking condition report. When such a report is received, or when poor conditions are reported, airport operators must also view other airport surfaces with a critical eye to make sure they too are able to safely support aircraft operations.



Michael W. Brown
Manager, Airport Safety and Operations Division

07/17/09
DATE



John Duncan
Manager, Air Transportation Division, AFS-200

CERTALERT DISTRIBUTION LIST