Federal Aviation Administration

Memorandum

Date: NOV 17 2008

To: Managers, District Offices, Technical Services, Technical Operations, Western Service Area (WSA)

From: Manager, Engineering Services, Technical Operations, WSA

Subject: Navigational Aids (NAVAIDS) and Abnormal Airport Environments (AAE)

Airport owners must maintain and improve runways and taxiways, and as a result there will be occasional runway closures and temporary threshold relocations. During runway closures, personnel and equipment may be present on the runway, or there may be other conditions which make it unsafe for an aircraft to land. Pilots are notified of runway closures through a Notice to Airmen (NOTAMS), and notification on the Automated Terminal Information System (ATIS) where available. Airports will sometimes but not always mark the closed surface or relocated threshold. An airport with a closed or shortened runway surface is considered to have an AAE. An Instrument Landing System (ILS) that leads a pilot to a closed runway surface represents a case of hazardously misleading information.

It is the policy of WSA, Technical Operations, that any ILS servicing a runway must be turned off throughout the duration of scheduled closures to avoid hazardous safety risks during AAE. The glide slope must be shutdown when a runway threshold is displaced or relocated. In that case, the localizer may continue to operate. Exceptions to this policy are allowed, when agreed on in writing by Operations Engineering, Flight Standards, Flight Procedures, and Terminal Services.

Exceptions are appropriate when users and providers agree there may be a procedural benefit to leaving the instrument guidance in place. A NAVAID is procedurally beneficial when it improves air traffic or Instrument Flight Rule (IFR) services (e.g. circling minima, localizer-only minima, approach separation, etc.). For example, a localizer is capable of bringing an aircraft below weather so that they can circle to an adjacent runway. Exceptions for glide slopes will be very rarely granted. In all cases, WSA Technical Operations must assure that construction activities will not degrade the ILS signals. For example, the presence of fill used for compaction or construction materials and equipment can degrade the accuracy of ILS signals.

Temporary runway closures which cannot practically be scheduled in advance, and that are of very limited duration, represent a blanket exception to this policy. Some examples are: runway inspection, snow removal, or disabled aircraft. These closures are limited in duration and are not scheduled far enough in advance to provide an opportunity to shut off the navigation systems.

Please refer any questions to Calvin Ngo, Operations Engineers/Navaids Support Center Manager, AJW-W15A, at (425) 227-2345 or Greg Weatherford, at (425) 227-2353.