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A Communication from the
Director of Air Traffic Procedures, Mission Support Services

***In this Issue**: VFR Aircraft Receiving Radar Advisories (VFR Flight Following) Approaching Class D, Approaches to a Closed Runway, STARS Weather Levels, Long-Line Dissemination of Weather Observations, Wrong Surface Landings*

VFR Aircraft Receiving Radar Advisories (VFR Flight Following) Approaching Class D

**T*E*R* What are ATCs responsibilities? Who is responsible for the pilot's communication responsibility within the Class D surface area?

Many times, pilots receiving VFR Radar Advisories believe that as long as they are talking to one ATC facility, they have fulfilled their responsibility for entering a Class D airspace. Pilots may believe that controllers will tell them when/if they are approaching a Class D surface area. As controllers, we have a responsibility to coordinate with the appropriate ATC facility having jurisdiction over the airspace, FAA Order JO 7110.65W states:

> **2-1-16. SURFACE AREAS**
>
> b. Coordinate with the appropriate control tower for transit authorization when you are providing radar traffic advisory service to an aircraft that will enter another facility's airspace.
>
> ***NOTE−***
> *The pilot is not expected to obtain his/her own authorization through each area when in contact with a radar facility.*

The pilot's responsibility to meet their radio communication requirement to enter Class D airspace is NOT eliminated when receiving VFR Radar Advisories. The Aeronautical Information Manual, 3-2-1, states:

> **d. VFR Requirements.** It is the responsibility of the pilot to ensure that ATC clearance or radio communication requirements are met prior to entry into Class B, Class C, or Class D airspace. The pilot retains this responsibility when receiving ATC radar advisories. (See 14 CFR Part 91.)

Since both the controller providing VFR Radar Advisories and the pilot who is receiving the advisories have a clear responsibility, there can be some confusion about which party is communicating with the ATC facility having jurisdiction over the Class D surface area. 14 CFR 91.129 includes language that specifies that it is the pilot's overall responsibility for complying with the Class D communications requirement.

There are a few ways controllers can assist pilots when providing VFR Radar Advisories that will ultimately help with controller workload. Since the pilot is responsible for their Class D communication requirement, if the controller coordinates with the ATC facility having jurisdiction over the surface area, let the pilot know, so they do not query you. If you are too busy to coordinate, you are required to terminate VFR Radar Advisories in a timely manner so the pilot is able to contact the Class D ATC facility prior to entry.

Approaches to a Closed Runway

T*E*R* **"Can you clear an aircraft for an ILS approach to a closed runway and circle to land on another runway?" The simple answer is yes.

There are times when an aircraft may ask for an approach to a runway that is closed, intending to land on another runway. This might be because the weather makes the approach preferable or necessary, or it could be for training. Upon completion of an instrument approach procedure to a closed runway, pilots may execute the published missed approach (or alternate issued instructions), side-step to a parallel runway (where allowed) or circle to another runway for landing (where circling is authorized).

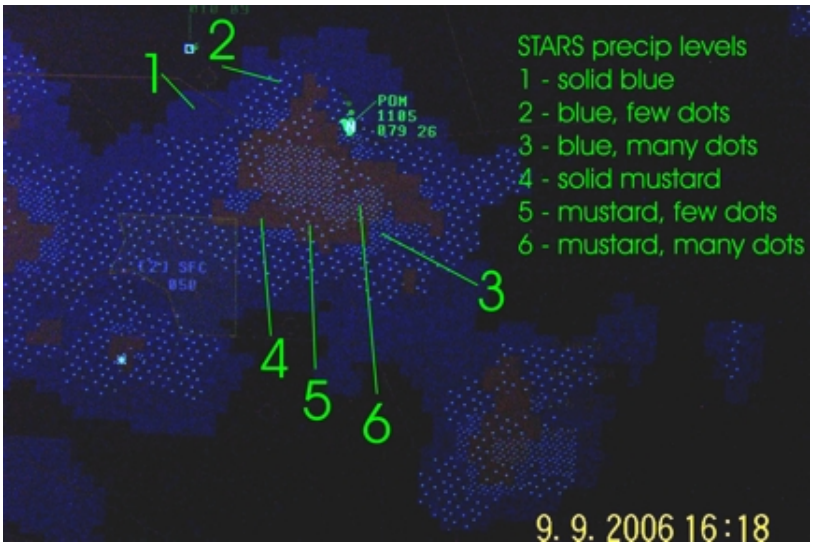
Controllers should check to be sure that the ILS (or other NAVAID) is transmitting and that it is useable. Some facilities may turn off ILS systems to runways that are closed. Also, make sure the approach lights are on when necessary. FAA Order JO 7110.65W, Paragraph 3-4-5, Approach Lights, anticipates approaches to one runway with a landing on another.

If a pilot requests to takeoff, land or touch-and-go on a closed or unsafe runway, inform the pilot that the runway is closed or unsafe in accordance with FAA Order JO 7110.65W, Paragraph 3-3-2, Closed/Unsafe Runway Information. FAA Order JO 7110.65W, Paragraph 3-4-10, Runway Edge Lights, requires that edge lights must not be turned on for a runway to be used for takeoff or landing when there is a NOTAM closing that runway.

Clear communications are the key to avoiding misunderstandings. Always provide pilots with complete and timely information about the airport/runway conditions and other pertinent information (FAA Order JO 7110.65W, Paragraph 3-3-3, Timely Information).

STARS Weather Levels

**T*R* An ATSAP Event Review Committee received an information request on the six STARS weather levels and how to correlate them to the four precipitation intensity levels. At those terminal facilities with six displayable weather levels, there have been questions about where the guidance exists to know how to correlate those into the four precipitation intensity levels: LIGHT, MODERATE, HEAVY, and EXTREME. The six weather levels are: Level 1 = LIGHT, Level 2 = MODERATE, Level 3 and 4 = HEAVY, and Level 5 and 6 = EXTREME. Since 1990, the Pilot/Controller Glossary definition of PRECIPITATION RADAR WEATHER DESCRIPTIONS has referenced Advisory Circular (AC) 00-45 which contained that correlation. The Flight Standards office changed AC 00-45 and removed that legacy information in 2016.



(Mustard color representation in picture for levels 4, 5 and 6 are not exact replication of color displayed on scope)

Air Traffic Procedures (AJV-8) will be working to publish this critical information in the appropriate publication as soon as practical.

Long-Line Dissemination of Weather Observations

****T*F*** All weather observers including LAWRS facilities should follow the guidance in FAA Order JO 7900.5D, Surface Weather Observing. If you are experiencing a problem with ASOS, inform the National Weather Service, ASOS Operations and Monitoring Center (AOMC).

FAA Order JO 7900.5D, paragraph 3.10.b, ASOS Operations and Monitoring Center (AOMC). If the observer believes that the ASOS information is inaccurate, they should notify the **AOMC at 1-800-242-8194 OR 8895**.

AWOS facilities in the lower 48 should report problems to the FAA National Enterprise Management Center (NEMC), which is located in both Atlanta and Salt Lake City. NEMC SOC number is **855-322-6363 (FAA-NEMC).** The call tree for this number, select #1 first, then #3. This will direct your call to the

appropriate entity (NEMC SOC/Team lead). AWOS facilities in Alaska should call the Alaska SOC (907-269-1803)

All AWOS/ASOS data is disseminated long-line through the AWOS Data Acquisition System (ADAS) which is located at the ARTCC for your area. Your facility may receive a call from NEMC if there is an FTI or ADAS problem. This will usually mean that the METAR/SPECI data from your automated weather system is not being disseminated long-line. Long-line dissemination is necessary so that Airline Operations, National Weather Service Forecasters, Flight Service Pre-Flight Briefers and other flight planning tools available to pilots are receiving your Airport's current weather report. If the METAR/SPECI is not being disseminated long-line, follow the procedures below.

FAA Order JO 7900.5D, paragraph 6.2, Summary of Backup Requirements

When long-line communications are unavailable, the report is to be relayed to the overlying ARTCCs Flight Data unit for entry into an FAA approved electronic system (for example, AIS-R, SWIM or similar systems), or, in Alaska, the FSS/Automated Flight Service Station (AFSS) will disseminate these reports.

Service A is the circuit that weather reports are transmitted over long-line. When your facility is notified that "Service A is Out-of-Service", that means your METAR reports are not being disseminated long-line and your facility must make an entry in the daily log, and implement the backup procedures in paragraph 6.2 above. If your facility has surface weather observers, you must inform the weather observers so they can implement the backup procedures.

Wrong Surface Landings

**T*E*R* National Quality Assurance efforts have identified "Wrong-surface Landing" as one of the Top 5 hazards that contribute to the highest safety risks in the NAS. Top 5 analysts report that events in which an aircraft lands on or aligns to the wrong runway, a taxiway, or the wrong airport tend to be among the highest-profile events in aviation. Data collected by ATSAP and CEDAR document 115 wrong surface events for the first three FY2016 quarters (from 10/01/2015 to 06/30/2016). During the same period in FY 2017 (from 10-01-2016 to 06-30-2017) there have been 135 wrong surface events.

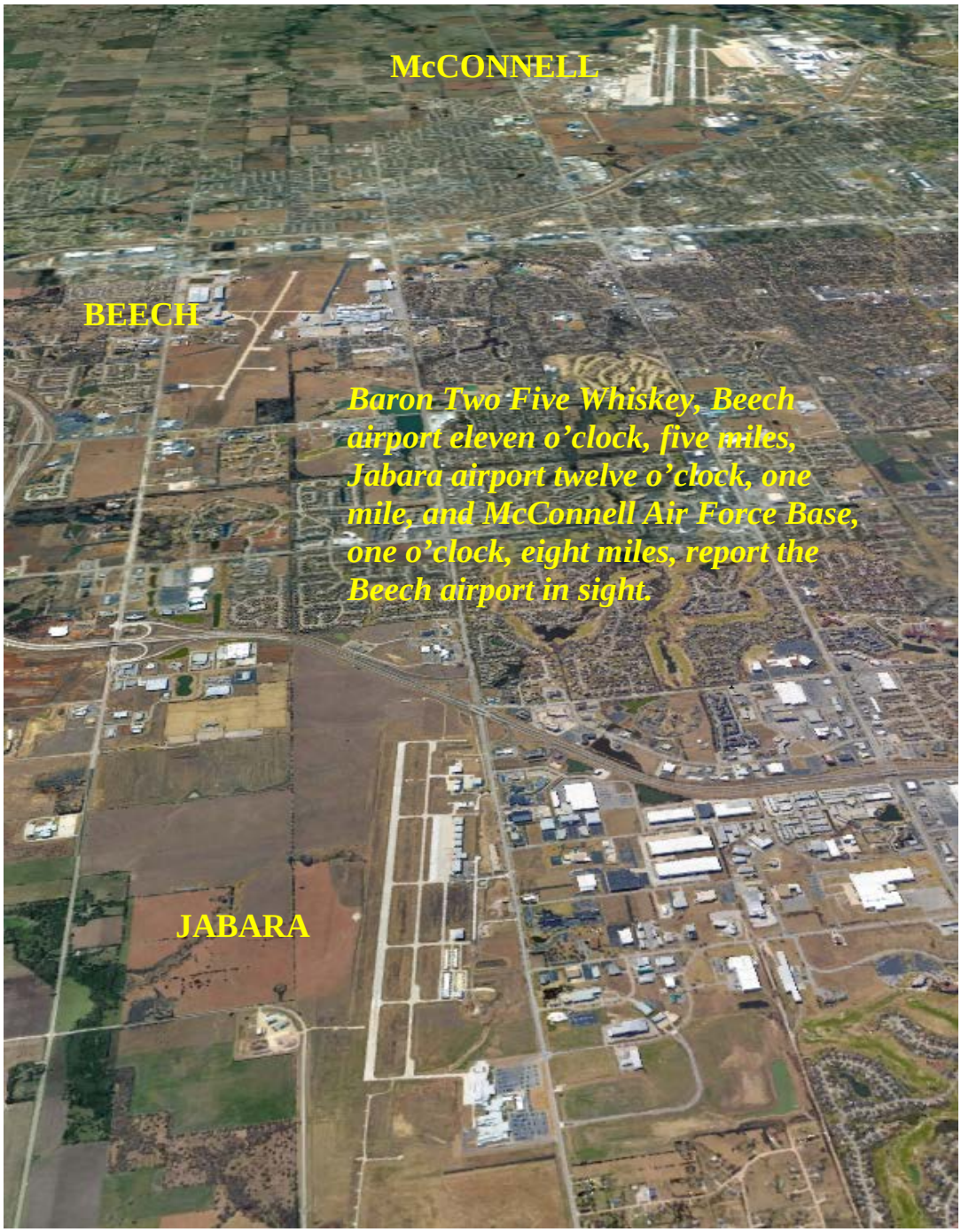
Typically, wrong surface landings/alignments are attributed to pilot error; however, there are measures that we can take to assist the pilot(s). Providing the location of the destination airport and the location of airports in close proximity (if applicable), adds another layer of safety to the system. Numerous conditions must be met prior to issuing a visual approach clearance. FAA Order JO 7110.65, paragraph 7-4-3 states:

7-4-3 CLEARANCE FOR VISUAL APPROACH.

f. In addition to the requirements of para 7−4−2, Vectors for Visual Approach, and subparagraphs a, b, c, d, and e, ensure that the location of the destination airport is provided when the pilot is asked to report the destination airport in sight.

g. In those instances where airports are located in close proximity, also provide the location of the airport that may cause the confusion.

EXAMPLE−
"Cessna Five Six November, Cleveland Burke Lakefront Airport is at 12 o'clock, 5 miles. Cleveland Hopkins Airport is at 1 o'clock 12 miles. Report Cleveland Hopkins in sight."



The Air Traffic Procedures Bulletin (ATPB) is a means for headquarters to remind field facilities of proper application of procedures and other instructions. It is published and distributed on an as needed basis.

Articles must be submitted electronically in Microsoft® Word by the offices of primary responsibility with approval at the group level or above. Articles may be submitted throughout the year.

*In this publication, the option(s) for which a briefing is required is indicated by an asterisk followed by one or more letter designators, i. e., * T – Tower, *E – ARTCC, *R – TRACON, or *F – FSS.*

(Reference FAA Order JO 7210.3, Facility Operation and Administration, paragraph 2-2-9)
Archived ATPB issues are available online: www.faa.gov/air_traffic/publications/