



FAA Airports

Frequently Asked Questions about the Takeoff and Landing Performance Assessment (TALPA) Initiative for Airport Operators

What is the Takeoff and Landing Performance Assessment (TALPA)?

TALPA is an improved way of assessing runway conditions, based on contaminant type and depth, which provides an aircraft operator effective means to anticipate airplane braking performance.

What is the TALPA Aviation Rulemaking Committee (ARC)?

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) formed the TALPA ARC following a December 2005 excursion at Midway Airport. Its purpose was to make recommendations on improving the safety of operations on wet or contaminated runways for both takeoff and landing. The ARC included representatives from air carriers/operators, aircraft manufacturers, airport operators, dispatchers, and regulators. The ARC's primary recommendations were:

- To use a Runway Condition Assessment Matrix (RCAM) and
- To ensure the use of common terminology by all parties involved in the process of determining and reporting the runway surface conditions and their effect on airplane performance.

What is the RCAM?

The RCAM is the tool airport operators will use to report a runway surface assessment when contaminants such as water, ice, snow, slush, and others are present on runways, taxiways, and aprons.

Where can I get a copy of the RCAM?

The RCAM can be found in Chapter 5 of Advisory Circular 150/5200-30, *Airport Field Condition Assessments and Winter Operation Safety* (as of version D).

What FAA guidance explains to airport operators how to use the RCAM?

AC 150/5200-30 (as of version D) will have the primary instructions. AC 150/5200-28, Notices to Airmen (NOTAMs) for Airport Operators (as of version F), and JO 7930.2, Notices to Airmen (NOTAM) (as of version R), are secondary sources explaining how to issue NOTAMs.

Will the FAA make available RCAM training for airport operators?

The FAA is developing training on how to use the RCAM. This training will be available in various formats (video, DVD, webinar) in summer 2016.

As an airport operator, what actions beyond training are required?

Airport operators will need to revise their Airport Certification Manuals, particularly the Snow and Ice Control Plan (SICP), to incorporate related changes to AC 150/5200-30. To help airport operators update their SICPs, the FAA is developing a change template that covers what must now be included in SICPs based on the revised AC.

Can the RCAM be used on surfaces other than the runway?

The FAA developed the RCAM to generate a Runway Condition Code (RwyCC) for paved runways. Aircraft operators can use the RwyCC to help determine braking performance. The condition description section of the RCAM can be applied to all airport surfaces.

What is a RwyCC?

A RwyCC is a numerical descriptor of runway conditions based on defined contaminants for each runway third.

For what types of surfaces can the airport operator use RCAM?

A RwyCC can only be assigned to Asphalt, Asphalt-Concrete, Concrete, and Porous Friction Concrete runways.

Who should use the RCAM?

The FAA developed the RCAM for airport operators to use to determine and report surface contaminants and to generate a RwyCC for paved runways.

Where can I find definitions for the list of contaminants listed on the RCAM?

AC 150/5200-30 (as of version D) defines the contaminants listed on the RCAM.

Can a new contaminant be added to the list if it is not currently listed?

No new contaminants can be added without validation. After the aviation community has a chance to use the RCAM, the FAA will re-evaluate the list to determine if new contaminants need to be added.

How was the list of contaminants identified?

The TALPA ARC developed and validated the contaminant list as the likely contaminants aircraft operators can expect to encounter and that will affect an aircraft's braking performance.

Will the FAA still allow the use of Certified Friction Measurement Equipment (CFME)/Decelerometers for condition assessments?

CFMEs and decelerometers will remain tools in your toolbox to assist in condition assessment for upgrading/downgrading a RwyCC and to assess braking action trends on other airport surfaces. However, Mu values will no longer be reported via the NOTAM system.

Will pilot braking action reports continue to be reported and disseminated?

Pilot braking action reports will still be solicited from pilots and disseminated by air traffic controllers to assist the airport operator in determining contaminated surfaces braking conditions.

Do RwyCCs replace Mu values for NOTAM action when reporting surface conditions?

Yes. RwyCCs replace Mu values in NOTAM field condition reports and will be used by pilots to conduct landing performance determinations.

Will the Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT) accept and distribute RwyCCs?

The ATCT will accept and distribute RwyCCs just as they handled Mu values.

How should a pilot use a RwyCC?

A pilot should make a landing distance assessment based on the reported RwyCC and reported contaminants.

When must an airport operator obtain/report RwyCC information?

The overall runway length and width or cleared width must be contaminated more than 25 percent in order to generate a RwyCC. Chapter 5 of AC 150/5200-30 (as of version D) explains the process.

How is the RwyCC determined?

The airport operator records the type of contaminants that are present on the surface and inputs that information into the NOTAM system. Depending on the type of contaminant, a contaminant depth or outside air temperature may also be needed. Using the rules of the RCAM, the NOTAM system generates a RwyCC automatically.

Can an airport operator override the NOTAM system and change a RwyCC?

Yes, a RwyCC can be downgraded at any time; upgrades are allowed under limited circumstances. AC 150/5200-30 (as of version D) explains downgrade/upgrade actions the airport operator can use for RwyCCs. The NOTAM system includes protocols to allow an airport operator to downgrade/upgrade a RwyCC.

Without the NOTAM system, how does an airport operator generate a RwyCC?

The NOTAM system called NOTAM Manager is the preferred and more efficient means of generating a RwyCC. A secondary system that will produce a RwyCC is E-NOTAM II (ENII), but it lacks some of the functionality that NOTAM Manager provides. The third way is via telephone to Flight Service.

Are general aviation airports affected by this new means of determining contaminants and generating RwyCCs?

All certificated airports and federally obligated airports must meet the requirements for generating RwyCCs. The RwyCC process is the only process available to general aviation airports that submits NOTAMs into the system.

Will the NOTAM System prevent RwyCC upgrading if operational requirements for the CFME/Decel are exceeded due to contaminant depth/type (or other CFME/Decel limitations)?

The NOTAM system will not prevent an airport operator from upgrading a RwyCC if operational requirements for individual assessment tools are exceeded. Protocol prompts in the NOTAM system seek to ensure the airport operator has considered specific items before a RwyCC can be upgraded. The airport operator should follow the

manufacturer's guidance for the tool and equipment being used to ensure use parameters are not exceeded.

Can the code be reversed if the pilot wants to land on the opposite direction runway?

RwyCCs are determined for a specific landing runway and direction. For opposite direction landings, a new assessment should be made. However, RwyCCs that are known for a specific runway may be used in the interim and in the reverse until the airport operator completes a new assessment for the opposite landing runway.

Can a RwyCC of "0" be reported in the NOTAM system instead of directly closing a runway?

It was the consensus of the TALPA ARC to stop operations and perform mitigating actions on a surface that's reporting a RwyCC of "0". Moreover, it is current practice to close surfaces with braking action being reported as Nil until mitigations are accomplished to increase braking actions .

Can airports not using the TALPA process be somehow identified to distinguish between RwyCC and Mu?

As of October 1, 2016, all Field Condition NOTAMs will use the new TALPA format. Airports without access to either NOTAM Manager or ENII will call Flight Service to provide their field conditions. Flight Service will originate a NOTAM on their behalf using the new format. The only way a pilot or dispatcher would get Mu information is via radio.