



Federal Aviation Administration

National Part 139 CertAlert

AdvisoryCautionary**Non-Directive**Advisory**Cautionary**Non-Directive**Advisory**Cautionary**Non-Directive**

Date: 10/14/2016 **No. 16-07**
To: Airport Operators/Authority, FAA Airport Certification Safety Inspectors (ACSIIs)
Subject: Personnel and Equipment in the Runway Safety Area (RSA)
Point of Contact: Freddie James, AAS-300, (202) 267-8792

1. Purpose. This CertAlert provides information and recommendations to airport operators on:

- Vehicle/equipment operations within the RSA
- Airport operator/authority responsibilities for protecting the RSA
- Intended use of a Letter of Agreement (LOA)

2. RSA Operations. The Office of Airports released an updated version of Advisory Circular (AC) 150/5210-20, *Ground Vehicle Operations* on September 1, 2015. AC 150/5210-20A, *Ground Vehicle Operations to include Taxiing or Towing an Aircraft on Airports*, Appendix C, defines the collaboration needed to produce the LOA that details the specific activities allowed in the RSA during aircraft operations.

- a. The RSA will normally be clear of people and equipment during aircraft landing and departure operations. If situations require moving or stationary vehicles or equipment in the RSA during operations, these events need documentation in an LOA. ***This will be an exception to normal procedures.***
- b. In accordance with AC 150/5370-2F, *Operational Safety on Airports During Construction*, no construction may occur in the RSA while the runway is open for aircraft operations. (The LOA is not for construction projects or major repairs.)
- c. Aircraft crossing through the RSA must continue to follow Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT) instructions.

3. Airport Operator Responsibility for Protecting the RSA. The airport operator/authority is tasked with protecting the RSA (paragraph 3.1.1 of Appendix C in AC 150/5210-20A). Any maintenance, mowing, or construction that occurs in the RSA is the responsibility of the airport operator per Appendix C, paragraphs 3.1.1.4, 3.1.1.5, and 3.1.1.11, and AC 150/5370-2F.

The airport operator/authority should consider air traffic operations, weather, and other conditions before allowing personnel or equipment into the RSA per Appendix C, paragraph 3.1.1.14.

A runway closure should be the first consideration if there are available runways before implementing the LOA. However, at airports with one runway, the LOA is a means of keeping the runway operational during aircraft operations. Certificated airports that elect to allow personnel into the RSA during operations must set up an LOA and send a copy for inclusion in the Airport Certification Manual.

- a. During aircraft operations, the airport operator manages RSA access with coordinated procedures outlined in the LOA. All entities will remain clear of the RSA, except when performing established procedures from the LOA.
 - b. Personnel in the RSA must maintain two-way radio communications with the ATCT and must know the boundaries of the RSA.
 - c. The LOA will document Technical Operations (Tech Ops) routine maintenance requirements during operations.
4. **Letter of Agreement.** The LOA defines the responsibilities and procedures parties must consider for accessing, operating, and exiting the airport's RSA during aircraft operations. Every airport is different, and the contents of each LOA will be unique. Sample LOAs are provided below and in the Advisory Circular, but will need to be revised to fit each airport. The one constant in the LOA is that it reflects the collaboration between the airport operator/authority, ATCT, and Tech Ops. While these groups will be the only signatories, the LOA will include provisions for all other approved users. ARP's role, specifically that of the ACSI, is to review the agreement and then accept it for inclusion into the ACM.



Brian Rushforth, Manager
Airport Safety and Operations Division, AAS-300

10/14/2016
Date

EXAMPLE #1: GENERIC SAMPLE LETTER OF AGREEMENT

EFFECTIVE: Month/Day/Year

SUBJECT: Requirements for Operating in the Runway Safety Areas (RSAs)

1. PURPOSE: This Letter of Agreement (LOA) defines the responsibilities and procedures that parties entering into this agreement must consider for accessing, operating within, and exiting the airport's RSA during air carrier or aircraft operations.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES:

a. XYZAA must:

(1) Provide training for personnel with permission to operate within the RSA, with special emphasis that vehicles avoid the Instrument Landing System (ILS) or Localizer arrays during low visibility conditions.

(2) Ensure personnel maintain positive radio communications with XYZ ATCT on frequency XXX MHz while operating within the RSA.

b. XYZ ATCT must:

(1) Provide training for ATCT personnel on RSA procedures.

(2) Maintain positive radio communications with personnel operating within the RSA on frequency XXX MHz.

c. FAA Tech Ops must:

(1) Provide training for entities with permission to operate within the RSA.

(2) Obtain prior permission from XYZAA and XYZ ATCT prior to operating within the RSA.

(3) Maintain positive radio communications with XYZ ATCT on frequency XXX MHz while operating within the RSA.

3. PROCEDURES:

a. *Describe specific procedures for personnel and equipment in the RSA during air carrier/aircraft operations. This will vary from airport to airport.*

(1) *Specific procedure Alpha...*

(2) *Specific procedure Bravo...*

(3) *Specific procedure Charlie...*

b. *General provisions:***4. ATTACHMENTS (if required)**

Airport Director

Air Traffic Manager

Technical Operations

EXAMPLE #2: SMALLER HUB LETTER OF AGREEMENT

EFFECTIVE: (Date)

SUBJECT: Vehicle Operations inside the Runway Safety Area (RSA)

1. **PURPOSE:** To establish procedures among the Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT) and Airport Operations/Maintenance, and FAA Technical Operations (Tech Ops) vehicle operators in movement and safety areas.
2. **PROCEDURES:**
 - a. All Airport Operations/Maintenance, ARFF, and FAA Tech Ops vehicle operators must notify “Ground Control” on frequency XXX MHz and provide their location upon entering and exiting the airfield movement areas. All vehicles will monitor Ground Control frequency XXX MHz at all times unless instructed or requested to switch to another frequency. Using clear and concise verbiage, Ground Control is required to instruct vehicles to proceed on the movement areas. Ground Control will instruct each vehicle, including those engaged in an escort role, to proceed on the movement area and to hold short of the specific runways.
 - i. **PHRASEOLOGY:** (Whatever phraseology is used for the specific airport.)
 - b. Once established on the airfield and unless otherwise instructed, vehicles may proceed on all taxiways, ramps, and service roads.
 - i. Should it become necessary to enter an RSA or ILS critical area or to proceed on or cross a runway, vehicles will hold short of the area. When frequency use permits, operators will state their request on Ground Control frequency XXX MHz. When the operation is complete, operators will inform Ground Control they are off of the affected area (i.e. RSA, ILS Critical area, or Runway), monitoring ground, and will continue to follow the procedure listed above.
 - ii. Certain situations and/or circumstances may require vehicles or equipment to be in the RSA for a limited amount of time during air carrier/aircraft operations, including: (add examples, which will be airport dependent)
 1. Scheduled or unscheduled NAVAID maintenance/repair:
 - a. Approach Lighting Systems

- b. ILS Ground Checks
 - c. (Other examples specific to the airfield)
- 2. Repair of airport-owned and maintained lighting and signs.
 - 3. Mowing Operations conducted by Airport Maintenance.
- iii. Prior to accessing the RSAs for maintenance and repair of FAA or airport-owned navigational aids and equipment, all Airport Operations/Maintenance and FAA Tech Ops pedestrians and ground vehicles will request authorization on Ground Control frequency XXX MHz and, once authorization is granted, maintain continuous communication with Ground Control while operating within the RSA. Vehicles should remain on paved parking surfaces to minimize damage to grass safety area surfaces. When circumstances allow, drivers will drop off needed equipment within the RSA and then position the vehicle outside of the RSA or as close to the RSA boundary line as possible without penetrating the Taxiway Object Free Area. Airport Operations/Maintenance and FAA Tech Ops will inform Ground Control when exiting the RSA.
 - iv. During low visibility, vehicles must remain clear of active ILS critical areas. During nighttime operations when access to the RSA is necessary, all care should be taken by vehicle operators to aim headlights away from the advertised runway approach direction as to not impede pilots' vision.
 - v. During periods of construction, the RSA will be protected and activity will be limited to that which is operationally necessary. Construction crews and equipment will be escorted by Airport Operations to ensure personnel remain within the work areas.
 - vi. All equipment that requires extended maintenance activities on or access via paved runway surfaces will require an escort from Airport Operations. This work typically will require a scheduled runway closure and an associated NOTAM initiated by Airport Operations.

3. ATTACHMENTS (if required)

Airport Director

Air Traffic Manager

Technical Operations

EXAMPLE #3: LARGER HUB LETTER OF AGREEMENT

XYZ International Airport (XYZ), Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) XYZ Airport, Air Traffic Control Tower (XYZ ATCT), and XYZ International Airport System Support Center (XYZ SSC)

LETTER OF AGREEMENT

SUBJECT: Requirements for Operating in the Runway Safety Areas (RSAs)

Effective: Date

1. PURPOSE: This Letter of Agreement (LOA) defines the responsibilities and procedures parties entering into this agreement must consider for accessing, operating within, and exiting the airport's RSAs during air carrier or aircraft operations. This document does not include maintenance activity on the runway and taxiway movement areas as depicted in other Movement Area LOAs.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES:

a. The XYZ Airport Operations must:

(1) Provide training for their personnel and city contractors with permission to operate within the RSA. Training must emphasize that vehicles remain clear of the Instrument Landing System (ILS) or Localizer arrays when the airport is below a 1,000 foot ceiling, visibility is less than 3 miles, or XYZ ATCT is dependent on the localizer.

(2) Ensure personnel maintain positive radio communications with XYZ ATCT on frequency XXX MHz (local control) while operating within the RSA.

b. XYZ ATCT must:

(1) Provide training for ATCT personnel on RSA procedures.

(2) Maintain positive radio communications with personnel operating within the RSA on frequency XXX MHz.

c. XYZ SSC must:

(1) Provide training for personnel with permission to operate within the RSA.

(2) Obtain prior permission from XYZ Airport Operations and XYZ ATCT prior to operating within the RSA.

(3) Maintain positive radio communications with XYZ ATCT on frequency XXX MHz while operating within the RSA.

3. PROCEDURES:

- a. When city work needs to be conducted within an RSA, the Manager of Airport Operations and the Manager of Field Maintenance will come to a mutual agreement that city workers, and or city contractors, will need to conduct work within the RSA during aircraft operations.
- b. Required work within the RSA may include mowing, city runway electrical signs/lights maintenance, or other airport safety-related circumstances where personnel and equipment will be operating within in the RSA during air carrier/aircraft operations.
- c. When circumstances allow, drivers may drop off needed equipment within the RSA and park the vehicle outside the RSA if practicable.
- d. Prior to work being conducted within the RSA, Airport Operations will coordinate with XYZ ATCT and issue an appropriate NOTAM indicating which work is being conducted and the location within the RSA.
- e. If work needs to be conducted within the ILS or Localizer arrays, it will be coordinated with ATCT. No work will be conducted within the ILS or Localizer arrays when the airport is below a 1,000 foot ceiling, visibility is less than 3 miles, or XYZ ATCT is dependent on the localizer.
- f. If an arriving or departing pilot requests the equipment or personnel vacate the safety area during their aircraft operation, Local Control will contact personnel working in the safety area on XXX MHz. Working personnel will advise when clear of the RSA and can resume work once advised by Local Control. XYZ ATCT will contact Airport Operations at (xxx) xxx-xxxx and advise them of the operation.
- g. No grading, trenching, excavating, or delivery of gravel and/or sand/dirt stock piles will be permitted in the RSA during aircraft operations.

4. **DEVIATIONS:** Deviations from procedures identified herein must be approved only after coordination between the Airport Operator/Authority, XYZ ATCT and XYZ SSC.

5. **ATTACHMENTS:** Airport diagram with RSA delineated.

Traffic Manager, John Smith, X-Ray Yankee Zulu ATCT

Manager, John Doe, FAA XYZ Technical Operations

Executive Director, Jane Doe, XYZ Regional Airport Authority

