

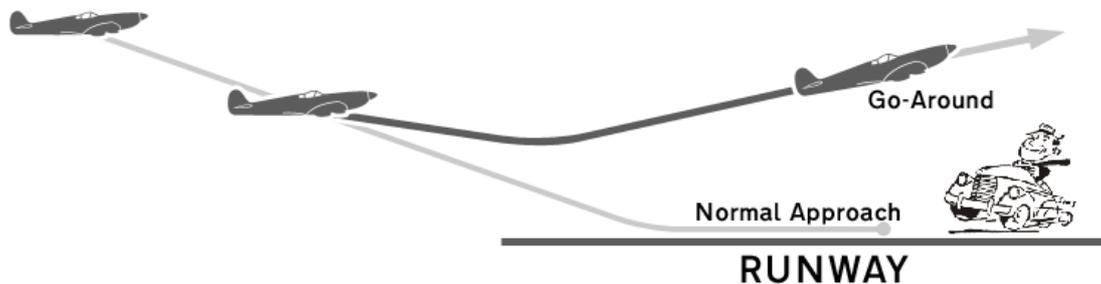


Vanquishing the V/PD

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Safety Section

Federal Aviation Administration Airports Division
Western-Pacific Region



This publication is directed primarily towards airport management to be disseminated to all levels of personnel working at your airfield. Vanquishing the V/PD can be accomplished through a solid partnership between the FAA and airport management. The responsibility of making sure that the proper safeguards are in place; however, lies squarely on the shoulders of airport management. Please use this information and all that follows as a guide by which to provide a safer environment at your airfield.

So there you are in your vintage Supermarine Spitfire on final approach at your local airport. Red over white, airspeed pegged, aircraft configured, and cleared to land. Suddenly, an automobile drives onto the runway and you are forced to execute a go-around. Although you are righteously outraged you resist the temptation to buzz the car as the gear swings up. Later, after the aircraft is parked and secured, you march over to the airport manager's office to find out who the idiot was driving the car and why he was on the runway. As you enter the airport manager's office you notice your friend sitting in a chair. It is the same friend you had invited to the airport to take pictures of your airplane. It is the same friend you had given the gate code to. And it is the same friend you had given vague instructions to on how to find your hangar. The airport manager fixes his gaze on you, invites you to have a seat and asks you to close the door behind you.

How often is this scene, more or less, played out at our local airports in America? Too often, I am afraid. After investigating scores of similar runway incursions it is apparent that the most dangerous person on the airport is not the wayward driver who blundered onto the active runway, but the tenant who enabled the driver to put himself in that

dangerous situation. By allowing a guest unescorted access to the airport, we are making a number of false assumptions:

- We assume that our guest understands and can identify areas on the airport where they are not allowed to go.
- We assume that our guest has the same knowledge of airfield signs and markings that we have.
- We assume that our guest is familiar with air traffic control tower (ATCT) clearances and procedures.
- We assume that our guest understands the dangers of walking or driving on the airside area of an airport.
- We assume that our guest will be able to locate our hangar although every hangar on the airport looks the same.
- We assume that our guest can orient himself/herself on the airport enough to where an escort is not necessary.
- We assume that our guest will exercise good judgment.

These assumptions are false and will inevitably lead to risk, embarrassment and, ultimately to tragedy. So what are some best practices to adopt when inviting guests onto the airfield?

- Never provide anyone with your access code.
- Always escort your guests.
- Never leave guests alone or unescorted.
- Never “buzz” guests into the gate remotely.
- Never allow a guest to drive on the airfield (even when you are present in the vehicle).
- Never put a guest in an unfamiliar and dangerous situation.

You are the ambassadors of aviation when you allow guests to visit your airport. Please do not turn their visit into a bad experience by making these false assumptions.

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http://www.faa.gov/airports/western_pacific/newsletter/