



Vanquishing the V/PD

3rd Quarter 2018

A quarterly publication from the
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 Vehicle/Pedestrian Deviation (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.

In the aviation community, Airfield Operations employees are considered professionals when it comes to the execution of their duties. This consideration applies especially to the manner in which they drive the movement areas at their airports. Since January 1, 2017, there have been seven V/PDs in the Western-Pacific Region involving Airfield Operations. All of them were runway incursions. With the exception of one incident, all occurred at large airports certificated under 14 CFR Part 139. This is an alarming trend we want to see reversed.

As you perform your airfield operational duties, keep in mind that you are professionals. Airfield Operations personnel work closely with the best air traffic controllers and the best pilots in the aviation industry. This is a very serious working environment and executing your assigned duties with a safe and professional attitude is paramount. How can you strive to accomplish this? We can begin by following a few, basic tenets:

- **Report for work physically and mentally fit.** It is your professional responsibility to govern your physical and mental condition. Working back-to-back shifts or reporting to work when you are ill does not promote mental acuity or safety. I have known airfield operations personnel who have fallen asleep while driving their vehicles and collided with other vehicles on the airfield.

- **Complacency kills.** We all understand that complacency leads to inattention and inattention leads to disaster. I have always found that the best remedy for a self-congratulatory or self-satisfied attitude is a simple walk through the terminal. The human connection of looking at the faces of the passengers and realizing that each one of them have families, friends and loved ones is enough to dispel complacency and garner attention to the task-at-hand.
- **Trust but verify.** Assuming that a given situation on the airfield is always correct is unwise. You can be satisfied that (usually) when Air Traffic Control (ATC) issues you a clearance, it will be safe to proceed; however, it is a good practice to verify your assumption by looking for traffic and comparing your situational awareness with ATCs. Do not trust that pilots or ATC never make mistakes. Pilots and ATC are humans and, as humans, make mistakes. This is why pilots, ATC and Airfield Operations should all back each other up by exercising situational awareness. The concept of trust but verify applies to every operational responsibility assigned to Airfield Operations personnel including self-inspection duties, escorting, overseeing construction activities, entering the runway environment or responding to an accident or incident.
- **The runway is sacred territory.** The runway environment must be treated in an inviolate manner. The boundary of this sacred territory begins at the runway holding position marking and ends where you exit the runway. When ATC clears you onto the runway, you have a clearance to occupy that space, much the same as an aircraft is granted sole occupation of airspace while flying IFR. We have recently had incidents in the Western-Pacific Region where airfield operations personnel have entered active runways, completely unaware that they were doing so. In some cases, inclement weather or disorientation contributed to the incursions. Nevertheless, in the most egregious cases, one or more of the preceding tenets were not followed. These incursions led to revocation of airfield driving privileges or outright dismissal of the employee.

Airport Operations employees are entrusted with the responsibility of executing their duties safely and professionally. They are considered dedicated professionals who keep the airport running safely and efficiently. Following the four tenets of professionalism will keep you out of trouble and keep you in the highest esteem of the flying public.

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