NOTICE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION
Air Traffic Organization Policy

N JO 7110.538

Effective Date:
November 15, 2010

Cancellation Date:
March 10, 2011

SUBJ: Runway Status Lights (RWSL)

1. Purpose of This Notice. This notice amends Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Order JO 7110.65, Air Traffic Control, to provide guidance for the operation of runway status lights.

2. Audience. This notice applies to the Terminal Services organization and all associated air traffic control facilities.

3. Where Can I Find This Notice? This notice is available on the MyFAA employee Web site at https://employees.faa.gov/tools_resources/orders_notices/ and on the air traffic publications Web site at http://www.faa.gov/air_traffic/publications.

4. Explanation of Policy Change. As part of an ongoing process to reduce runway incursions, the FAA is installing RWSLs at 23 airports throughout the United States. This system consists of runway entrance lights and takeoff hold lights which provide pilots with an increased situational awareness of when the runway is safe to enter/depart from.

5. Procedures.

a. Add Paragraph 3-4-20, Runway Status Lights (RWSL), to FAA Order JO 7110.65 to read as follows:

3-4-20. RUNWAY STATUS LIGHTS (RWSL)

TERMINAL

RWSLs are equipped with automatic intensity settings and must be operated on a continuous basis under the following conditions:

a. If a pilot or vehicle report indicates any portion of the RWSL system is on and is not able to accept an ATC clearance,

1. ATC must visually scan the entire runway. If the runway is observed to be clear, the lights must be turned off and clearance re-issued.

2. ATC must visually scan the ASDE-X if a portion of the runway is not visible from the tower. If the runway is observed to be clear, the lights must be turned off and clearance re-issued.

NOTE-
1. *Once RWSLs are turned off, they must remain off until returned to service by technical operations personnel. A NOTAM must be issued during any outage of the system.*

2. *The system status "Lost Comm" does not indicate in or out. This status must be checked and operation of the system must be checked and confirmed by technical operations personnel.*

b. Upon pilot request, adjust the light intensity. As soon as possible, return the lights to the automatic setting.

b. Add the following definitions to the Pilot/Controller Glossary to read as follows:

RUNWAY ENTRY LIGHTS (REL)—An array of red lights which include the first light at the hold line followed by a series of evenly spaced lights to the runway edge aligned with the taxiway centerline; and one additional light at the runway centerline in line with the last two lights before the runway edge.

RUNWAY STATUS LIGHTS (RWSL) SYSTEM—The RWSL is a system of runway and taxiway lighting to provide pilots increased situational awareness by illuminating runway entry lights (REL) when the runway is unsafe for entry or crossing and take-off hold lights (THL) when the runway is unsafe for departure.

TAKE-OFF HOLD LIGHTS (THL) – The THL system is composed of in-pavement lighting in a double, longitudinal row of lights aligned either side of the runway centerline. The lights are focused toward the arrival end of the runway at the "line up and wait" point, and they extend for 1,500 feet in front of the holding aircraft. Illuminated red lights indicate to an aircraft in position for takeoff or rolling that it is unsafe to takeoff because the runway is occupied or about to be occupied by an aircraft or vehicle.

6. Distribution. This notice is distributed to the following Air Traffic Organization (ATO) service units: Terminal, En Route and Oceanic, and System Operations; the ATO Office of Safety; Office of the Service Center; the Air Traffic Safety Oversight Service; the William J. Hughes Technical Center; and the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center.

Nancy Kalinowski

For Nancy B. Kalinowski
Vice President, System Operations Services
Air Traffic Organization

9-14-10
Date Signed