

NOTICE

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

N JO 7110.618

Effective Date:
March 29, 2013

Cancellation Date:
March 28, 2014

SUBJ: Guidance for the Use of Runway Status Lights (RWSL) Light System

1. Purpose of This Notice. This notice provides guidance for the operation of the RWSL system. As part of an ongoing process to reduce runway incursions, the Federal Aviation Administration is testing RWSLs at numerous airports throughout the United States. This system consists of runway entrance lights (REL) and take-off hold lights (THL) that increase a pilot's situational awareness of when the runway is safe to enter/depart from. A new paragraph will not be added to FAA Order JO 7110.65 until all testing is complete.

2. Audience. This notice applies to the Air Traffic Organization (ATO) Terminal Services Units at the following airport: Orlando International Airport (MCO). Airports that are not currently conducting RWSL testing but that may begin testing RWSL, are as follows: George Bush Intercontinental/Houston Airport (IAH); Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport (PHX); Washington Dulles International Airport (IAD); Minneapolis-St. Paul International/Wold-Chamberlain Airport (MSP); Charlotte/Douglas International Airport (CLT); Fort Lauderdale/Hollywood International Airport (FLL); Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA); Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport (DTW); Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport (BWI); Chicago O'Hare International Airport (ORD); McCarran International Airport (LAS); San Francisco International Airport (SFO); and LaGuardia Airport (LGA).

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. This notice cancels N JO 7110.581, Guidance for the Use of Runway Status Lights (RWSL) Light System at Orlando, FL, Airport (MCO), effective May 4, 2012. It removes the requirement to disseminate RWSL outages via frequency broadcast as well as the Automatic Terminal Information Service (ATIS) message and deletes the phraseology requirement controllers must use to inform pilots of RWSL outages.

5. Procedures. The following procedures must be used:

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RWSL is equipped with automatic intensity settings and must be operated on a continuous basis except under the following conditions:

a. If a pilot or vehicle operator report indicates any portion of the RWSL system is on and is not able to accept an air traffic control (ATC) clearance:

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

(2) If a portion of the runway is not visible from the tower, ATC must visually scan the Airport Surface Detection Equipment (ASDE-X). If the runway is observed to be clear and the lights are still illuminated, then the lights must be turned off and clearance re-issued.

b. When the RWSL Operational Status displays “Lost Comm with System,” consider the RWSLs out of service until checked and confirmed to be operational by technical operations personnel.

c. Once RWSLs are turned off, they must remain off until returned to service by technical operations personnel.

d. Upon pilot request, adjust the light intensity.

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

7. **Background.** Prior to this change, when a component of the RWSL system fails or is taken out of service for maintenance, ATC must broadcast the outages on the local and ground frequencies, and put the information on the ATIS. This has resulted in an increase in controller workload as well as creating ATIS broadcasts that are too long in duration. On July 19, 2012, a teleconference was held with the RWSL Program Office, Flight Standards, the Runway Safety Office, and Technical Evaluations to discuss the need and proper method to inform pilots of this type of outage. It was determined that it was not necessary to advise pilots via broadcast and ATIS regarding partial RWSL system outages, and current guidance is being amended to reflect these determinations.

8. **Definitions.**

a. **Runway Entrance 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.

b. **Runway Status Lights (RWSL) System** — The RWSL is a system of runway and taxiway lighting to provide pilots increased situational awareness by illuminating RELs when the runway is unsafe for entry or crossing and THLs when the runway is unsafe for departure.

c. **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.



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3/22/13
Date Signed