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Administration**

InFO

Information for Operators

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http://www.faa.gov/other_visit/aviation_industry/airline_operators/airline_safety/info/all_infos

An InFO contains valuable information for operators that should help them meet certain administrative, regulatory, or operational requirements, with relatively low urgency or impact on safety. The contents of this document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

Subject: Use of Liquid Water Equivalent System (LWES).

Purpose: This InFO serves to remind pilots and operators to use all available tools when utilizing LWES.

Background: The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has received reports indicating that some pilots may not be utilizing all available resources when operating in snow and ice conditions. This could lead to takeoffs in unsafe conditions if pilots rely solely on LWES reports without considering Meteorological Aerodrome Reports (METAR) and/or visual observations when discrepancies arise.

Discussion: When determining if weather conditions are safe for takeoff in snow and ice conditions, pilots have several tools available to them. METAR and visual observations have been traditionally used for this purpose, but LWES is increasing in use. While LWES can often provide more precise information than other methods, METAR reports and visual observations should still be factored into the decision-making process when assessing the safety of takeoff in conditions involving freezing contaminants.

LWES can be used to provide accurate weather reports but has limitations. As stated in AC 120-112, the reliability threshold for acceptance of a LWES system is 95%, which means a 5% error rate is possible in a LWES report. Additionally, the LWES station and the METAR station may be located on different locations of the airfield experiencing differing conditions than where the pilot is attempting takeoff. Because of these considerations, there may be situations where a METAR or visual report is more accurate than what is being reported by LWES system.

When using LWES, pilots should always consider METAR reports and visual observations to verify the LWES report, especially if the pilot-in-command (PIC) has doubts as to the accuracy of the LWES report. While LWES can provide more accurate data than other methods, pilots should still consider METAR reports and visual observations when determining if a takeoff can be safely made in conditions which contain freezing contaminants. Pilots are reminded that the ultimate authority for the safe operation of an aircraft rests with the PIC.

Additional information is available online at:

https://www.faa.gov/other_visit/aviation_industry/airline_operators/airline_safety/deicing

Recommended Action: Certificate holders should review their company manuals and training programs for accuracy and consistency to ensure pilots correctly apply procedures that complement the LWES applications. Additionally, certificate holders should review and update their training programs to ensure pilots understand:

- The difference between Holdover times (HOT) vs. Allowance times;
- Determining correct HOT chart usage, including an understanding of the Notes section;
- Pre-takeoff checks, Pre-takeoff contamination checks, and when they are applicable;
- Fluid specific tables and generic HOT tables.

Proficiency with these topics will enable pilots to verify LWES information, in consideration of METAR reports or visual observations, or utilize deice procedures when LWES is not available.

Contact: Direct questions or comments regarding this InFO to the Air Transportation Division at 9-AFS-200-Correspondence@faa.gov. Questions regarding operator-specific ground de-icing programs should be directed to the operator's Certificate Management Team.