



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation  
Administration**

# SAFO

Safety Alert for Operators

SAFO 10008  
DATE: 5/24/10

Flight Standards Service  
Washington, DC

**[http://www.faa.gov/other\\_visit/aviation\\_industry/airline\\_operators/airline\\_safety/safo](http://www.faa.gov/other_visit/aviation_industry/airline_operators/airline_safety/safo)**

*A SAFO contains important safety information and may include recommended action. SAFO content should be especially valuable to air carriers in meeting their statutory duty to provide service with the highest possible degree of safety in the public interest. Besides the specific action recommended in a SAFO, an alternative action may be as effective in addressing the safety issue named in the SAFO.*

**Subject:** Ground Operations During the Hours of Darkness at Uncontrolled Airports

**Purpose:** To emphasize the importance of developing training and checking scenarios for ground operations at night at non-towered airports or towered airports after tower operations have ceased.

**Discussion:** Recently there has been an increase in the number of incidents involving aircraft operating (taxi, take-off and landing) at night where flightcrews have failed to activate the airport Pilot Controlled Lighting system (PCL). The rising trend of these incidents indicates manuals and training programs should be reviewed for clarity in this area. Operators should ensure that flightcrews demonstrate knowledge and proficiency during training and checking events in the use of the Common Traffic Advisory Frequency (CTAF) and PCL systems. The training should include instructions on the activation of the variable intensity capabilities of the PCL systems. Additionally, operator policies should ensure that night ground operations (taxi, take-off and landing) are conducted only on lighted airfields. Proper use of the CTAF should also be reviewed. Operators are reminded of their responsibility to ensure that flightcrews are provided with the training and procedures to ensure the highest degree of safety.

**Additional Information:** The following references contain information for aircraft ground operations:

- Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM), pg. 2-1-8. Pilot Control of Airport Lighting
- AC 90-42F, Traffic Advisory Practices at Airports without Operating Control Towers
- AC-120-74A, Parts 91, 121, 125 and 135 Flight Crew Procedures During Taxi Operations
- AC120-71A, Standard Operating Procedures for Flight Deck Crewmembers

**Recommended Action:** Directors of safety, directors of operations, instructors, and air carrier flightcrews should be familiar with the content of this SAFO. They should work together to ensure that the content of this SAFO is provided to pilots during ground training, reinforced in flight training, during supervised operating experience, line checks and proficiency checks. Directors of Operations are also reminded terminal operations into uncontrolled airspace are required to be listed (airport specific) in each scheduled air carrier's operations specifications.

**Contact:** Questions or comments concerning this SAFO should be addressed to the Air Carrier Training Branch, AFS-210, Rob Burke via e-mail at [Robert.Burke@faa.gov](mailto:Robert.Burke@faa.gov) or phone at (202) 267-8262.