



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

SAFO

Safety Alert for Operators

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Flight Standards Service
Washington, DC

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.

Subject: Confirming the Takeoff Runway

Purpose: This SAFO emphasizes the importance of implementing standard operating procedures (SOPs) and training for flight crews to ensure that an airplane is at the desired takeoff runway, and to recommend some modern resources and procedures for doing so.

Background: Recently the crew of a commercial jet attempted a takeoff while on the wrong runway at Lexington, Kentucky, resulting in a fatal accident. This accident was one more in a history of takeoffs from the wrong runway or, in some cases, from a taxiway. In the past the NTSB and the FAA have recommended various procedures in an attempt to prevent such mistakes. Previously issued SAFO 06013 recommends a number of good operating practices to enhance pre-takeoff and takeoff safety.

Discussion: This SAFO expands upon information initially published in SAFO 06013, by taking particular note of modern resources not previously available to pilots when attempting to positively confirm and cross-check the takeoff runway. Some of these resources are in the airplane, others are not.

a. Horizontal Situation Indicator (HSI). One of the most vivid pictures available to pilots today is the HSI display in modern, electronic flight instrument system (EFIS)-equipped cockpits. When holding short and when in takeoff position, one pilot should select to the most expanded scale available on the HSI to confirm that the airplane is where the crew intends it to be.

b. Flight Management System (FMS). When in takeoff position, one pilot should verbally announce that the correct runway and departure procedure are selected in the FMS and that the airplane's heading agrees with the assigned runway for takeoff. Most "glass" (EFIS) airplanes display that FMS information on the HSI.

c. Air Traffic Control (ATC). A pilot may call upon ATC (ground control) for help in confirming position at any time during taxi or when holding short of a runway. At many U.S. airports, airport surveillance radar (ASR) is being supplemented by more precise ground

surveillance equipment, such as airport surface detection equipment (ASDE and ASDE-X) and airport movement area safety systems (AMASS). Help from ATC might be particularly valuable in conditions of reduced visibility.

The Golden Rule -- Use all available resources, old and new, to ensure your airplane is positioned correctly for the desired takeoff runway -- when holding short and when in takeoff position. The best SOPs may be a blend of proven old practices and new ones.

Recommended action: Directors of safety, directors of operations, fractional ownership program managers, trainers, and pilots should be familiar with the content of this SAFO. They should establish and implement aircraft-specific SOPs, supported by pilot training which exploits all available resources (including the most modern ones), in an effort to positively confirm and cross-check the takeoff runway and the airplane's location at the assigned departure runway before crossing the hold-short line for takeoff, and again once in takeoff position.