Federal Aviation Administration
National Part 139 CertAlert

****Advisory**Cautionary**Non-Directive**Advisory**Cautionary**Non-Directive**Advisory**Cautionary**Non-Directive****

Date: **April 2, 2014**   **No. 14-02**

To: **Airport Operators**

Subject: **Increase in the Numbers of Vehicles and/or Equipment Inadvertently Hitting and Damaging Airplanes in the Ramp/Gate Areas**

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1. **Purpose.** This CertAlert encourages airport operators to review their driver's training programs and consider the recommendations below.

2. **Background.** There have been several recent accidents in the non-movement area of airports involving vehicles such as food service trucks, airplane tugs, baggage tow vehicles and their carts, and other wheeled vehicle and equipment used to service aircraft. These accidents resulted in people being killed or injured, and/or damaged aircraft. All stakeholders in the airport environment must work together to counteract this trend.

3. **Recommendations for Airport Operators.**

   a. Conduct a comprehensive review of the Airport Driver's Training Program and any assigned tenant driver's training programs for vehicle operations in and around the ramp or gate areas. Continue to emphasize that only those vehicles and vehicle operators necessary to conduct airport/air carrier operations are authorized on the ramp areas.

   b. Review, and consider implementing as appropriate, applicable items from the Airport Cooperative Research Program's (ACRP's) *Synthesis 29, Ramp Safety Practices.* You can access the report at http://www.trb.org/Publications/Blurbs/166314.aspx.

   c. Review any existing Letters of Agreement or Memorandums of Understanding involving vehicles and vehicle operators that the airport has with airport tenants, Fixed Base Operators, and airport contracted services. Ensure only essential vehicles have access to the ramp area and operators are appropriately trained.

   d. If practical, reduce the number of non-essential or infrequent vehicle operators to lessen the exposure and risk for incidents on the ramp. For example, an airport may wish to review and limit a tenant's operational area to further reduce potential accidents in the ramp environment.

   e. Implement and/or increase the periodic vehicle spot checks by airport operations staff or associated airport law enforcement officers to raise awareness of safe vehicle operations on the ramp area.

   f. Add to or revise driver's training materials to emphasize vehicle operations in the ramp areas. Consider identifying the direction of travel vehicles should take when approaching

airplanes in the ramp areas. Further emphasize that drivers should use one or more spotters when backing vehicles or equipment toward an airplane, especially when operating in tight spaces on the ramp.

g. Implement circle of safety procedures as they relate to backing vehicles and equipment toward airplanes parked on the ramp. The circle of safety is a circular area extending an agreed-upon number of feet beyond the wingtips, nose, and tail of an airplane. Any vehicle backing within the circle of safety will require one or more spotters.

h. Ensure all vehicles and equipment have chalks or other pre-positioned stopping devices that can be deployed before backing vehicle or equipment toward airplanes in the ramp area.

i. Consider a gradual penalty program for violations of airport policies, including retraining, fines, and other deterrents as appropriate.

j. Review additional information, current news, important messages, and training aids available at the following website: http://www.faa.gov/airports/airport_safety/

k. Follow these best practices for vehicle drivers on the ramp or gate area:

(1) Operate within established speed limits for the ramp area and vehicle specifications.

(2) Become familiar with the airplane circle of safety and use spotters when backing vehicles and equipment toward airplanes in the ramp area. Ensure vehicles are equipped with chalks or other stopping devices and pre-position them along with spotters before attempting to back toward airplanes on the ramp.

(3) Increase vigilance when operating vehicles in the ramp areas at all time and especially during periods of reduced visibility and at night.

(4) Avoid using eye wear that impairs vision or creates conditions where objects are overly shaded, thus diminishing the ability to gage distances or proximity to airplanes.

(5) Eliminate distractions while driving in the ramp or gate area. Do not use cell phones or other electronic devices in the ramp or gate area.

(6) Focus attention and have your "head up" and "eyes out" of the vehicle.
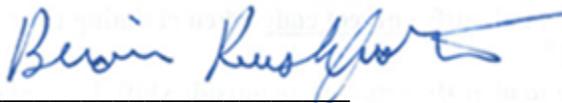
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