



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

Office of Airport Safety and Standards

800 Independence Ave, SW.
Washington, DC 20591

September 13, 2023

Dear Airport Sponsor:

This letter provides awareness of and guidance on maintaining airport-owned¹ approach lighting systems and visual (including lighted navigational) aids.

Background

Advisory Circular ([AC 150/5340-26C](#), *Maintenance of Airport Visual Aid Facilities*) provides guidelines for the maintenance of airport visual aid facilities, including a visual glideslope indicator system (VGSI)², runway end identifier lights (REILs), or an approach lighting system (ALS)³ not owned, operated, and maintained by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). In addition, provisions in the current version of AC 150/5340-26, paragraph 3.7, describe the actions of airport sponsors when visual aids are implicated in an aircraft accident.

In several recent aircraft accidents, the FAA has become aware of airport-owned visual aids (VisAids) that have not been maintained in accordance with the guidance outlined in 150/5340-26. Moreover, there have been instances where the airport operator has failed to maintain appropriate trained staff or contracted services to ensure airport owned VisAids are being maintained appropriately. In some instances, the airport sponsors were unfamiliar with AC 150/5340-26 guidelines for maintaining airport-owned VisAid facilities and sponsor responsibilities when VisAids are identified as a potential suspect in an aircraft accident.

Airport Sponsor Responsibilities

Federally Obligated Airports

The use of AC 150/5340-26 is mandatory for all applicable projects funded with Federal grant monies through the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) and other federal programs, along with revenue from the Passenger Facility Charges (PFC) Program. See Grant Assistance No. 34, Policies, Standards, and Specifications, and PFC Assurance No. 9, Standards and Specifications.

¹Airport-owned approach lighting is systems owned or operated on the airport other than those owned, operated, and maintained by the Federal Aviation Administration.

²VGSI include precision approach path indicators (PAPI) and visual approach slope indicators (VASI).

³ALS include ALSF-II and MALS (F/R). Note: For airport-owned approach lights associated with an Instrument Landing System (ILS), additional requirements under [Title 14 CFR Part 171 – Non-Federal Navigational Facilities](#) may apply.

Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) part 139 Certificated Airport Operators
Applicable requirements under 14 C.F.R. Part 139 require airport operators to document airport-owned lighting systems in the Airport Certification Manual (ACM), train personnel properly, and maintain systems to ensure each item provides an accurate reference to the user. Reference National Part 139 [Cert Alert 23-03](#) (*Airport-Owned Approach Lighting System Oversight*), dated 4/27/2023.

Recommendations

To ensure proper maintenance and oversight of airport-owned approach lighting systems and VisAids, it is essential to review federal obligations and certification status as they pertain to AC 150/5340-26. Airports should also consider the following:

- (1) Maintain contact with the manufacturer of airport-owned approach lighting systems and VisAids to establish ongoing technical support.
- (2) Obtain comprehensive manuals, specialized adjustment tools, and recommended maintenance schedules. Incorporate updates as issued or recommended.
- (3) Plan and budget for regular inspection and maintenance of lighting systems.
- (4) Prepare and maintain maintenance logs and systems, as well as, site-specific safety training.

Requirements per AC 150/5340-26 when lighted NavAids and/or VisAids are identified as a potential suspect in an aircraft accident:

- a. Immediately inspect the affected facility and record as-found for all functional parameters per the appropriate table of Appendix A, Standards and Tolerances, of AC 150/5340-26.
- b. Retain the as-found inspection record (technical performance record) per paragraph 3.4 of AC 150/5340-26 and store it at the airport manager's office (on site at the airport) for ready access by authorized personnel.
- c. Prepare a maintenance log entry and include a written statement that a facility "as-found inspection" is complete. The airport sponsor/owner/operator should also verify and state that the equipment is functional per the manufacturer's standards, tolerances, and specifications. The statement should be delivered to the airport manager for filing in the airport manager's office.
- d. Contact the Operations Control Center (OCC) to cancel the Notice to Air Mission (NOTAM). NOTAM cancellation should be conducted per FAA JO 7930.2, current revision.

If you have questions, please contact your appropriate FAA Airports Division Regional Office (Airport Certification Safety Inspector or FAA Airports District Office as applicable).

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John R. Dermody". The signature is stylized and cursive, with the first name "John" being the most prominent part.

John R. Dermody, P.E.
Director, Airport Safety
and Standards