



Federal Aviation Administration

National Part 139 Cert Alert

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

Date: 4/27/2023 **No. 23-03**

To: Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) part 139 Certificated Airport Operators

Subject: Airport-Owned Approach Lighting System Oversight

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1. Purpose. This National Certification Alert reminds Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) part 139 (part 139) certificated airport operators of the importance of comprehensive maintenance, training, and oversight programs for airport-owned¹ approach lighting systems.

2. Background. Airport sponsors/owners/operators have the ability to install 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 FAA. When an airport-owned approach lighting system is installed, part 139 certificated airport operators are responsible for establishing maintenance, training, and oversight programs for these systems. Oversight includes actions initiated when the FAA notifies an airport operator a lighted navigational aid is out of service due to being suspect in an aircraft accident.

Applicable requirements under 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.

14 CFR § 139.203 Contents of Airport Certification Manual. (b)(14)

"...the certificate holder must include in the Airport Certification Manual the following elements, as appropriate for its class: (14) A description of, and procedures for maintaining, the marking, signs, and lighting systems, as required under § 139.311."

14 CFR § 139.303 Personnel. (c)(4)

"Train all persons who access movement areas and safety areas and perform duties in compliance with the requirements of the Airport Certification Manual and the requirements of this part. This training must be completed prior to the initial performance of such duties and at least once every 12 consecutive calendar months. The curriculum for initial and recurrent training must include at least the following areas...(4) Duties required under the Airport Certification Manual and the requirements of this part."

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

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

³ ALS 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.

14 CFR § 139.311 Markings, signs, and lighting. (d) Maintenance.

“Each certificate holder must properly maintain each marking, sign, or lighting system installed and operated on the airport. As used in this section, to “properly maintain” includes cleaning, replacing, or repairing any faded, missing, or nonfunctional item; keeping each item unobscured and clearly visible; and ensuring that each item provides an accurate reference to the user.”

14 CFR § 139.311 Markings, signs, and lighting. (f) Standards.

“FAA Advisory Circulars contain methods and procedures for the equipment, material, installation, and maintenance of marking, sign, and lighting systems listed in this section that are acceptable to the Administrator.”

In addition to the manufacturer's recommended maintenance, airport operators should consult Advisory Circular (AC) 150/5340-26, *Maintenance of Airport Visual Aid Facilities* (current), which establishes guidance and specifications for maintaining airport-owned approach lighting. Section 3.7 of this AC outlines steps airport operators should initiate when notified by the FAA a lighted navigational aid is out of service due to being suspect in an aircraft accident.

3. Action. Review approach lighting systems on the airport and verify ownership, maintenance, and oversight responsibilities.

All part 139 certificated airport operators must ensure the following:

- The facility's ACM describes approach lighting ownership (e.g., FAA or Airport-Owned).
- The ACM defines procedures for maintaining airport-owned approach lighting systems.
 - Identifies who is responsible for maintenance.
 - Details system maintenance schedule and tasks.
- Airport-owned approach lighting is properly maintained.
- Maintenance records⁴ are retained in accordance with procedures established in the facility's ACM.
- Training for all persons performing duties required under the ACM for maintaining airport-owned approach lighting systems is documented.
- There are sufficient and qualified personnel to maintain airport-owned approach lighting.
- The positions responsible for initiating actions related to Section 3.7 of AC 150/5340-26 are identified within the ACM.

⁴ AC 150/5340-26, 3.2.1 (current) states, “To ensure that visual lighting aids are properly maintained, maintenance logs (see example in appendix B) should be kept for all non-federal lighted navigational aids (precision approach path indicators (PAPIs), visual approach slope indicators (VASIs), runway end identifier lights (REIL), and omnidirectional approach light systems (ODALS). The maintainer of these facilities, if different from the airport sponsor/owner, should provide copies of the completed maintenance log to the airport manager to be filed at the airport.”

- Documentation of maintenance, training, and oversight is made available for inspection⁵ by the Airport Certification Safety Inspector (ACSI).

4. Related FAA Standards and Additional Resources. Airport operators should consult the current versions of the following documents and additional resources on the FAA website.

- [AC 150/5340-26 – Maintenance of Airport Visual Aid Facilities](#)
Provides guidelines for maintenance of airport visual aid facilities.

Additional resources on [Non-Federal NavAids, Automated Weather Observation Systems \(AWOS\), and Other Systems](#) are available on the FAA Website.



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⁵ FAA Order 5280.5, 4.14.2, paragraph 19 (current) states, “The ACSI is responsible for verifying the following information: Airport-owned approach lighting systems (ALSs) are properly maintained. Approach lighting owned by the airport [e.g., visual glideslope indicator systems (VGSI), runway end identifier lights (REILs), and ALSs] is covered by this section. If the airport operator owns the REIL/VGSI systems, there are also required procedures for checking calibration.”