

Air Traffic Procedures Bulletin

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A Communication from the
Director of Air Traffic Procedures, Mission Support Services

In this Issue: *Vehicles Performing Runway Operations, Progressive Taxi Instructions, Clear of Runway, Ground Traffic Movement*

Vehicles Performing Runway Operations

*T When the reference to “aircraft/vehicles” in FAA Order 7110.65W, 3-7-2c, TAXI AND GROUND MOVEMENT OPERATIONS, was changed in Notice 7110.708 to provide separate paragraphs for aircraft and vehicles, requests for clarification began occurring. While not explicitly written, it was a common practice that vehicles performing runway operations did not require a clearance to cross an intersecting runway. The vehicle was given the entire runway to perform whatever operation they needed. A tower facility may add a requirement in an LOA that *always* requires a crossing clearance for vehicle operators performing a full runway operation.

In summary, unless required by a local agreement, a vehicle performing a full runway operation (inspection, snow removal, etc.) does not require a crossing clearance across intersecting runways. But safe practices should remain unchanged at a facility that chooses to provide more restrictive practices. Positive control using explicit language is always recommended when safety is a concern.

Progressive Taxi Instructions

*T “Tower, United 653, we are going around, there’s an aircraft on the runway.” Too many times, pilots get lost or are unfamiliar with airports and end up where they shouldn’t be. FAA Order 7110.65 paragraph 3-7-2 states, “Issue the route for the aircraft/vehicle to follow on the movement area in concise and easy to understand terms. The taxi clearance must include the *specific* route to follow.” Contained in this same paragraph (3-7-2g.) is a provision to, “Issue *progressive* taxi/ground movement instructions...”

NOTE- *Progressive instructions may include step-by-step directions and/or directional turns.*

Progressive taxi is defined in the P/CG as: “Precise taxi instructions given to a pilot unfamiliar with the airport or issued in stages as the aircraft proceeds along the taxi route.”

A pilot stating they are unfamiliar with the airport or they appear to be lost or confused as to what route to follow are indications that a progressive taxi instruction would be appropriate. A lost or confused pilot is

also an indication that they should be watched a little more closely to ensure that the directions have been correctly understood and followed.

Clear Of Runway

*T There is discontinuity between FAA Order 7110.65, the Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM), and 14 CFR Part 91.129 when applying separation to a *clear* runway by definition and/or procedure.

- FAA Order 7110.65, Paragraph 3-10-9, RUNWAY EXITING, Subparagraph b., Note 1, and the AIM, Paragraph 4-3-20, Exiting the Runway After Landing, both state: *In the absence of ATC instructions, the pilot is expected to taxi clear of the runway by taxiing beyond the runway holding position markings associated with the landing runway, even if that requires the aircraft to protrude into or across another taxiway or ramp area.*
- 14 CFR Part 91.129 states, “No person may, at any airport with an operating control tower, operate an aircraft on a runway or taxiway, or take off or land, unless an appropriate clearance is received from ATC.” In other words, a pilot cannot move his aircraft onto a taxiway without explicit instructions from ATC.

For example, an aircraft crosses or turns off the runway at an identified intersection without restriction to movement across the runway holding position markings, and is clear of the runway edge line. It is up to the pilot to *clear the runway* even if that requires the aircraft to protrude into or enter another taxiway/ramp area.

The issue is when an aircraft exits the runway and comes to a stop while the next arriving aircraft crosses the landing threshold or a departing aircraft begins takeoff roll. By definition, the exiting aircraft is clear of the runway when all parts of the aircraft are beyond the runway edge and there are no restrictions to its continued movement beyond the applicable runway holding position markings. An arriving or departing aircraft with a wingspan wider than the runway could collide with the exiting aircraft if it does not continue past the the runway holding position markings. This is ambiguously stated as *clear of the runway* without there being any ability for some pilots to be able to determine when they are clear of the runway position holding markings. When properly anticipating separation, Local/Ground Control must issue timely instructions to the exiting aircraft so that continuous movement across the hold line is ensured.

As defined in the P/CG, CLEAR OF THE RUNWAY states that a pilot or controller may *consider* an aircraft clear of the runway when *all parts of the aircraft are beyond the runway edge*; however, there must be continued movement beyond the runway holding position markings. This allows the controller to *anticipate* separation reference the next arrival or departure. That is the intent. *The key part is “continued movement”*. *By definition, without the continued movement, the aircraft cannot be considered clear of the runway.*

A Document Change Proposal has been developed for the AIM and FAA Order 7110.65 that will place the responsibility for ATC to issue a clearance that allows the aircraft to taxi clear of the runway. The pilot will also have an expectation to clarify ATC instructions to clear the runway if none are received.

Ground Traffic Movement

*T Effective with the November 10, 2016, change to FAA Order 7110.65W, the phraseology “proceed as requested” may no longer be used to authorize vehicles, equipment or personnel to cross or operate on a runway (FAA Order 7110.65W, paragraph 3-7-1, GROUND TRAFFIC MOVEMENT.) Specific instructions for runway and taxiway access for ground traffic movement must now be used. This change incorporates the same requirements for vehicles, equipment and/or personnel movement that currently exist for aircraft. It does not preclude the use of “proceed as requested” in other situations not involving runway access.

As a reminder, in accordance with FAA Order 7110.65W, paragraph 3-7-1b, GROUND TRAFFIC MOVEMENT, do not issue unconditional instructions when authorizing movement on a runway/taxiway for the purpose of airfield checks or other airport operations. Instructions must ensure positive control with specific instruction. Phrases such as “the field is yours,” “cleared on all surfaces,” “the airport is yours” and “proceed on all runways and taxiways” are not approved for use.

The Air Traffic Procedures Bulletin (ATPB) is a means for headquarters to remind field facilities of proper application of procedures and other instructions. It is published and distributed as necessary.

Articles must be submitted electronically in Microsoft® Word by the offices of primary responsibility with approval at the group level or above.

*In this publication, the option(s) for which a briefing is required is indicated by an asterisk followed by one or more letter designators, i. e., * T – Tower, *E – ARTCC, *R – TRACON, or *F – FSS.*

*(Reference FAA Order 7210.3, Facility Operation and Administration, paragraph 2-2-9)
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