

C E R T A L E R T

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ADVISORY * CAUTIONARY * NON-DIRECTIVE

FOR INFORMATION, CONTACT AIRPORT SAFETY AND OPERATIONS DIVISION AAS-300,
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**TO: AIRPORT OPERATORS CERTIFICATED UNDER 14 CFR
PART 139**

TOPIC: PERSONNEL AND EQUIPMENT IN THE RUNWAY SAFETY AREA

The presence of personnel and equipment in the Runway Safety Area (RSA) continues to generate concerns with respect to airport safety. The dimensional standards of a RSA, which is centered on the runway centerline and surrounds the runway, can be found in AC 150/5300-13, *Airport Design*. The safety area around a runway is intended to provide an additional level of safety, should there be a lateral excursion, an overrun, or an undershoot by an aircraft.

This Certalert is to reinforce the requirements of 14 CFR Part 139.309(b)(4) which states: "No object may be located in any safety area, except for objects that must be located in a safety area because of their function." Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) interpretation of the word "objects" that are permissible within the runway safety area is basically limited to navigational equipment, airfield signs and lighting, the frangible points of which are no higher than 3 inches above grade. **Vehicles, mowing equipment and other large equipment (not including hand tools or small equipment that will not cause damage to an aircraft in case of a collision) are not considered acceptable objects in the safety area during air carrier aircraft operations except for the areas described below under "Authorized RSA Activity.**

The Airport Traffic Control Tower (ATCT) personnel control movement of aircraft and vehicles **only in movement areas**. Movement areas are runways, taxiways, and other areas of an airport, which are used for taxiing, takeoff, and landing of aircraft, exclusive of loading ramps and aircraft parking areas. Except for runway/taxiway movement areas the RSA is considered non-movement area. When authorized personnel request clearance to enter the portion of RSA that is non-movement area, ATCT personnel are providing authorization for *access* to the RSA, but not a *clearance to be* in the RSA. **Protection of the non-movement portion of the RSA and the personnel who are in the RSA is the certificate holder's responsibility, not that of the ATC personnel.** Any event that would occur in the non-movement portion of the RSA lies within the

certificate holder's purview, and for that reason, the airport operator shall take the necessary steps to protect the RSA.

Authorized RSA Activity

The primary objective is to maintain the full runway safety area free of objects, including large equipment and vehicles. Traffic, weather, and other conditions permitting, the certificate holder is expected to make runway closure the first and highest priority before allowing personnel/equipment into an RSA. However, if it becomes necessary to gain access to the RSA without discontinuing operations, maintenance activity may occur on the following conditions. In addition to the conditions below, personnel shall maintain two-way radio communications with ATCT. (See AC 150/5370-2, *Operational Safety on Airports During Construction*, for construction distances.)

RSA parallel to runway sides.

- (1) Access by vehicular, mowing and other equipment is limited to areas **more than 200 feet from the runway centerline or the current RSA**, as defined in AC 150/5300-13, Airport Design, unless the runway is closed or air carrier aircraft operations are restricted.
- (2) During air carrier operations, only personnel may enter this area. If necessary to drop off light or small equipment, a vehicle may be brought into the area between air carrier operations, provided it is then removed from the RSA immediately.
- (3) Vehicles, mowing equipment and other large equipment may not penetrate the Obstacle Free Zone (OFZ), as defined in AC 150/5300-13 Airport Design.

RSA beyond the runway ends.

- (1) Access by vehicular, mowing and other equipment is limited to areas **more than 200 feet from the runway end** unless the runway is closed or air carrier aircraft operations are restricted.
- (2) During air carrier operations, only personnel may enter this area. If necessary to drop off light or small equipment, a vehicle may be brought into the area between air carrier operations, provided it is then removed from the RSA immediately.
- (3) The personnel, material and equipment must be protected from jet blast.
- (4) Various transitional surfaces outlined in AC 150/5300-13 and Terminal Instrument Procedures (TERPS) must be protected.

Waivers

In a situation where a high mass object currently penetrates any of the areas previously defined, a waiver may be requested by the airport operator with proper safety considerations for vehicles and personnel to penetrate these areas during air carrier operations. High mass includes objects that are substantial enough to cause considerable damage to aircraft. Examples include NAVAIDS that are mounted on large heavy structures and equipment shelters constructed of concrete. The Airports Regional Offices, AXX-620 Branch, will approve these waivers on a case-by-case basis. Appeal of a denial may be made to the Airport Safety and Operations Division, AAS-300, Federal Aviation Administration, 800 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20591. Waivers will be documented through the Runway Safety Area Operations Plan (a memorandum of understanding between the airport operator and any organization needing access to the runway safety area) and an amendment to the Airport Certification Manual. This plan would require any organization needing access to the runway safety area to specify when it must access this area and what procedures will be used to ensure compliance with the runway safety area restrictions.

Operators of part 139 certificated airports are responsible for ensuring that personnel working in or adjacent to the RSA know the boundaries of the RSA and the type of operations, so that they keep vehicles, mowing equipment and other large equipment clear of the RSA during air carrier aircraft operations. This information will be found in the airport's Airport Certification Manual/Specifications.

Aside from the authorized RSA activity described above, vehicles, mowing equipment and other large equipment in the RSA during an air carrier aircraft operation will be viewed as a violation of part 139.

CERTALERTS 99-02 (19 March 1999) and 99-04 (10 August, 1999) are hereby cancelled.

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