



**FAA
Great Lakes Region, Airports Division
Safety Standards Branch**

Winter Operations at General Aviation Airports

The presence of contaminants such as snow, ice, or slush on airfield pavements causes hazardous conditions that may contribute to airplane incidents and accidents. Accurate and timely airfield condition reports issued through the Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) system are critical to the safety of aircraft operating at your airport.

In 2016, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) with extensive industry collaboration introduced new concepts and practices including a less subjective approach for airport operators to use in assessing and reporting airport conditions. The new method is referred to as the Runway Condition Assessment Matrix (RCAM) and should be utilized for all federally obligated airports when assessing and disseminating runway condition information.

When airfield conditions are less than dry, surface conditions can have operational impacts on aircraft utilizing your airport. As an airport operator, accurate **and** timely reporting of airfield conditions is critical to safe aircraft operations. At airports where airfield conditions are not being monitored continuously, the airport should use a **“conditions not monitored”** NOTAM as a way to provide information to pilots to be cautious on the reliability of the last reported airfield condition report.

Below are a few reminders and best practices to incorporate within your snow removal program:

Snow Planning

- A Snow and Ice Control Plan (SICP) is one of the most effective ways to meet the challenges of winter events and address service expectations. The plan should provide guidance to personnel responsible for snow removal, prioritizes efforts, and keeps the airport community and tenants informed of access limitations and conditions that could have operational and safety impacts to the airport. Review your plan's effectiveness with those involved in winter operations prior to and after the snow season.

Airfield Assessments

- Assessing and reporting changing conditions of airfield surfaces is of the utmost importance to airport users. Airport operators should be inspecting facilities frequently and report conditions with a NOTAM.
- Surface precipitation type, depth, temperature, pilot braking reports, and friction measurements should be continuously monitored. Continuous monitoring of these elements are key in generating the new standardized Runway Condition Codes (RwyCC). The RwyCC is a more comprehensive and standardized method of assessing and reporting surface conditions and is determined by using the RCAM explained in Advisory Circular [150/5200-30D](#), Table 5-2.
- For airports utilizing friction-measuring devices, Mu numbers should not be shared or disseminated to pilots. Mu numbers may still be used as an effective tool in the assessment process and evaluation of trending surface conditions.
- Snowbanks can obstruct a pilot's view of lights and signs or be a hazardous height that could interfere with aircraft props, wings, or impede directional control of the aircraft. Safe operations require any accumulation of snow to not interfere with aircraft propellers, landing gear, or obscure runway or taxiway lights, signs, markings, or navigational aids (NAVAIDS).

- Airport operators may request a pilot reported braking action (PIREP). This information also serves as a good tool in determining snow removal effectiveness and assists in targeting future snow removal needs.
- Reports or observations of **NIL** braking action should immediately **CLOSE** that surface until the hazard no longer exists.

Reporting Conditions

- Airports have the responsibility to inform their users about field conditions, closures, and any hazards that exist at their airport. Timely and accurate surface condition reporting is critical for pilot planning. Contaminants on runway surfaces can affect aircraft takeoff performance, erode margins of safety that increase the risk of runway overruns. Since airfield conditions can change rapidly, methods should be put in place to ensure timely condition updates.
- RwyCC's calculated from the RCAM should be reported immediately upon calculation.
- Obscured or damaged airfield signage, lighting, and markings should also be reported via a NOTAM.
- Vehicle Braking Action (Good, Medium, Poor) may be reported for **non-runway** surfaces ONLY.

NOTAMS/FICONS

- NOTAM Manager is the preferred method for issuing a field condition report (FICON) providing standardization of content disseminated. A FICON is a NOTAM generated to reflect pavement surface conditions on runways, taxiways, and aprons and RwyCC's if greater than 25 percent of the overall runway length and width coverage or cleared width of the runway is contaminated. It is the most efficient dissemination of field conditions and automatically calculates the RwyCC. **If your airport is not on NOTAM Manager, airports should contact the NOTAM Manager Deployment Team at 816-329-2550.** Even the smaller Part 139 airports with limited staffing are finding this system useful and beneficial to their operation.
- "Conditions Not Monitored" – When field conditions will not be monitored, follow the most recent observation with the words "Condition not monitored (date/time) (date/time)." The time parameters specified must fall within the effective expiration times. FICON NOTAMs are considered temporary and will not exceed 24 hours.

!ABC ABC RWY 13 FICON 1/1/1 100 PRCT ICE OBSERVED AT 1701040230. CONDITIONS NOT MNT 1701040300-1701050300.

- If your airport has set hours when conditions are not regularly monitored, it is possible for airports to publish these longstanding NOTAMs so these NOTAMs do not have to be updated daily. Airports that want to submit a long term Field Condition Not Reported NOTAM, should submit the request to the NFDC website below, under Aeronautical Chart Changes.
https://www.faa.gov/air_traffic/flight_info/aeronav/aero_data/Aero_Chart_Changes/
- Note: It is important to clarify that "Conditions not monitored" and "airport unattended" are not the same. Unattended is related to services at your airport such as obtaining fuel.
- Chart Supplement has published a set schedule when conditions are not monitored, a "SFC Conditions Not Monitored" NOTAM is not necessary to reflect these same hours.

- “Surface Conditions Not Reported” - When it is determined that no surface condition reports will be taken for longer than a 24-hour period, issue a single NOTAM for the entire time-period. Use the phrase “SFC CONDITIONS NOT REPORTED”. This will be issued as an Aerodrome (AD) NOTAM while “Conditions Not Monitored” is a FICON NOTAM.

!ABC ABC AD AP SFC CONDITIONS NOT REPORTED 1701062200-17090500

- NOTAMs should be updated, reflect accurate conditions, and be cancelled when the conditions no longer exists.
- Refer to Advisory Circular [150/5200-28F](#) and [FAA Order JO 7930.2](#) for additional guidance on NOTAMs.

Operational Safety

- It is encouraged to close runways for snow removal activities when snow removal personnel will occupy the runway for an extended period of time.
- In conjunction with issuing NOTAMs, communicate field current field conditions to Air Traffic Control (ATC) or directly to pilots via the common traffic advisory frequency (CTAF) if there is no operating control tower.
- Monitor appropriate ATC frequencies or CTAF during snow removal operations. Extra vigilance with radio communications for possible aircraft operations is necessary for situational awareness and operational safety.
- Advisories for snow removal activity should be occasionally announced on CTAF when there is no active control tower or when the tower has closed.
- Regardless of clearances or closures, ALWAYS ensure your personnel remain alert and heads up when operating on runways and taxiways.

Resources

The FAA has extensively outreached to industry on the recent changes to winter operations safety. Advisory Circular [150/5200-30D](#), “Airport Field Condition Assessments and Winter Operations Safety”, is a key reference document that all airport operators should be familiar with as it pertains to winter operations safety. Additionally, FAA has a resource page on our website that contains the majority of the following web links. Visit: <https://www.faa.gov/about/initiatives/talpa/>

Resource Web Links <i>(clickable links below)</i>	Description
Runway Condition Assessment Matrix	Allows airport operators to assess a runway surface when contaminants are present in order to generate and report a Runway Condition Code (RwyCC).
Reportable Contaminants	Identifies reportable contaminants and reportable depths.

Assessment (TALPA) Initiative for Airport Operators	Provides answers to questions about TALPA, RCAM, and the process for reporting runway conditions.
Airport Condition Reporting and the Runway Condition Assessment Matrix (RCAM) (Video)	Discusses and demonstrates revisions to the process of assessing and reporting runway surface conditions.
Airport Safety Information Video Series - Winter Operations Update (Video)	Reviews pre-season planning and best practices for winter operations, and takes a look at new approaches, reporting methods, and terminology.

For Airport Operators

Resource	Purpose	Publication Date
AC 150/5200-28F, Notices to Airmen (NOTAMs) for Airport Operators	Provides guidance on using the NOTAM system for reporting airport facilities changes or outages and for utilizing the Runway Condition Assessment Matrix for airport condition reporting.	12/30/2016
CertAlert 16-10: Announcement of Publication of New Advisory Circular (AC) 150/5200-28F, Notices to Airmen (NOTAMs) for Airport Operators (PDF)	Announces the release of AC 150/5200-28F, which provides guidance on using the NOTAM system for airport condition reporting.	12/30/2016
Airport Condition Reporting and the Runway Condition Assessment Matrix (RCAM) Presentation with Notes (MSPowerPoint)	Self-pace presentation with note pages that illustrates revisions to the process of assessing and reporting runway surface conditions.	10/2016
CertAlert 16-06: Announcement of the Take Off and Landing Performance Assessment (TALPA) Initiative Implementation Date and Time (PDF)	Reminds airport operators of the October 1, 2016, TALPA implementation date and alerts them to pending additional guidance updates.	9/30/2016
Video: Assessing and Reporting Airport Conditions	An abbreviated version of the Airport Condition Reporting and RCAM video that discusses and demonstrates revisions to the process of assessing and reporting runway surface conditions.	9/26/2016

Resource	Purpose	Publication Date
Video: Airport Condition Reporting and the Runway Condition Assessment Matrix (RCAM) (V.2)	Discusses and demonstrates changes to the process of assessing and reporting airport conditions. Narration differs from the 9/8/2016 version.	9/23/2016
Change 1 to AC 150/5200-30D, Airport Field Condition Assessments and Winter Operations Safety	Change 1 provides additional guidance on implementing TALPA. Specifically, it updates information on reporting wet runway, slippery when wet reporting procedures, unacceptable aspects of reporting Mu values to aircraft operators, using current runway in use for generating runway surface condition reports, airport operators abilities to use mitigations to improve runway conditions, and using Conditions Not Monitored and Surface Conditions Not Reported NOTAMs.	3/8/2017
CertAlert 17-02, Announcement of Change 1 to AC 150/5200-30D, Airport Field Condition Assessments and Winter Operations Safety (PDF)	Announces the availability of Change 1 to AC 150/5200-30D.	3/8/2017
Airport Condition Reporting and the Runway Condition Assessment Matrix (RCAM) Video (Version 1)	Discusses and demonstrates revisions to the process of assessing and reporting runway surface conditions.	09/08/2016
CertAlert 16-02: Airport Snow and Ice Control Plan Revision and Snow and Ice Control Plan (SICP) template (PDF) Snow and Ice Control Plan (SICP) template (MS Word)	Provides airport operators with an updated Snow and Ice Control Plan (SICP) template to assist them with revisions to their Airport Certification Manual (ACM).	8/2/2016
CertAlert 16-04: Informational Webinars on Airport Condition Reporting and the Runway Condition Assessment Matrix (RCAM) (PDF)	Announces the dates and times for webinars for airport operators and other stakeholders about the new process for assessing and reporting surface conditions using the assessment tool known as the Runway Condition Assessment Matrix (RCAM).	8/18/2016

Resource	Purpose	Publication Date
AC 150/5200-30D, Airport Field Condition Assessments and Winter Operations Safety	Provides guidance on developing a snow and ice control plan, assessing and reporting airport conditions using the Runway Condition Assessment Matrix (RCAM), and establishing snow removal and control procedures.	07/29/2016
AC 150/5300-13, Airport Design	Contains the FAA standards and recommendations for the geometric layout and engineering design of runways, taxiways, aprons, and other facilities at civil airports.	09/28/2012
Frequently Asked Questions about the Takeoff and Landing Performance Assessment (TALPA) Initiative for Airport Operators (PDF)	Provides answers to questions about TALPA, RCAM, and the process for reporting runway conditions.	12/22/2016
Order 5190.6, FAA Airport Compliance Manual	Provides guidance to FAA personnel on interpreting and administering the continuing commitments airport sponsors make to the U.S. Government when they accept grants of federal funds or federal property for airport purposes.	09/30/2009
Airport Safety Information Video Series - Winter Operations Update	Reviews pre-season planning and best practices for winter operations, and takes a look at new approaches, reporting methods, and terminology.	10/28/2014
Revised Runway Condition Assessment Tool for Airport Operators (PDF)	Allows airport operators to assess a runway surface when contaminants are present in order to generate and report a Runway Condition Code (RwyCC).	07/29/2016
Reportable Contaminants in Field Condition (FICON) Notices to Airmen (NOTAMs) (PDF)	Identifies reportable contaminants as well as the reportable depths.	06/07/2016