SUBJ: Selecting Active Runways

1. Purpose of This Notice. This notice amends FAA Order JO 7210.3CC, Facility Operation and Administration, paragraph 10-1-6, Selecting Active Runways.

2. Audience. This notice applies to the following Air Traffic Organization (ATO) service units: Air Traffic Services, Mission Support Services, System Operations Services, Safety and Technical Training, and all associated air traffic facilities.


4. Explanation of Policy Change. This change clarifies responsibilities associated with selecting active runway(s). The final authority for determining runway(s) in use rests with the Airport Traffic Control Tower (ATCT) supervisor/controller in charge (CIC). This change emphasizes that tailwind and crosswind considerations take precedence over delay/capacity considerations and noise abatement operations/procedures/agreements.

5. Procedures/Responsibilities/Action. Amend FAA Order JO 7210.3CC by changing the following paragraph to read as follows:

10−1−6. SELECTING ACTIVE RUNWAYS

The ATCT supervisor/CIC determines which runway/s are designated RUNWAY IN USE/ACTIVE RUNWAY/DUTY RUNWAY.

a. Coordinate with affected facilities.

b. Select the RUNWAY IN USE/ACTIVE RUNWAY/DUTY RUNWAY by considering all known factors that may in any way affect the safety of takeoff/landing operations including the initial departure and the instrument approach phases of flight within terminal area airspace. Factors to consider include: surface wind direction and velocity (including gusts), wind shear/microburst alerts/reports, airport conditions, primary airport and adjacent airport traffic flows, weather activity, arrival/departure restrictions (and other airport-specific traffic management initiatives), environmental factors, etc.
NOTE—
Consider the adverse effect of short-duration changes when selecting active runways or airport configurations. For example, “chasing the wind” could have adverse effects.

c. Responsibility for designating RUNWAY IN USE/ACTIVE RUNWAY/DUTY RUNWAY may be further delegated; however, a facility directive must be issued to define specific coordination requirements.

d. Tailwind and crosswind considerations take precedence over delay/capacity considerations, and noise abatement operations/procedures/agreements.

e. ATCTs must formalize, in their Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and Letters of Agreement (LOA) (as applicable), local procedures compliant with the provisions of this paragraph.

No further changes to paragraph.

6. Distribution. This notice is distributed to the following ATO service units: Air Traffic Services, Mission Support Services, and System Operations, and Safety and Technical Training; the Air Traffic Safety Oversight Service; the William J. Hughes Technical Center; and the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center.

7. Background. Aircraft arrival and departure operations generally use the runway(s) most nearly aligned with the wind direction when the wind velocity is 5 knots or more. Other considerations such as runway length, available approach aids, noise abatement, delay/capacity considerations, and other factors may influence the selection of active runways.

National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) Recommendation A-10-109 included recommendations concerning runway selection criteria that proactively considers current and developing wind conditions, including gusts. In addition, this change is responsive to safety issues identified in Air Traffic Safety Action Program (ATSAP) Corrective Action Request (CAR) 2012-009 Runway Configurations – Tailwind/Crosswind Operations.

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