



December 2020

ATSAP SAFE

Discussion Sheet



“Safety Awareness for Excellence”

Excerpts from ATSAP Reports

“I observed [ACFT] holding short of RWY 20R at TXY Bravo during my position preview prior to starting the relief briefing for the LC position. [ACFT] was cleared for takeoff on RWY 20R at intersection Bravo (midfield) by the controller being relieved. After the takeoff clearance was issued, I initiated the relief briefing and was informed that the ACFT was unfamiliar during the briefing. After taking the position, I received a coordination call from [APPROACH]. After accomplishing the verbal coordination, I continued my scan and located [ACFT] airborne and northbound off RWY 2L at Bravo. After realizing that the ACFT had departed the incorrect direction from the midfield intersection, I coordinated with [APPROACH] and issued control instructions to ensure separation with other ACFT. Upon review of the radar replay and recorded audio, it appears that the pilot's unfamiliarity played a large role in the incident.”

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“... a low altitude alarm sounded. I visually saw [ACFT] and determined it was safe for landing. LLWAS alarm sounded and I issued it. Then when I looked again seconds later, [ACFT] had landed on TXY H. I issued the Brasher and gave the pilot the number to call. Wind shear micro bursts and thunderstorms were present during this event.”

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“[ACFT] checked in on the ILS RWY28R approach. I informed the ACFT they could circle north of the field at their discretion, RWY10R cleared to land. The pilot read back the clearance. The pilot circled on short final as expected and landed on RWY10L. From the tower, I could not tell if they were lined up for the wrong RWY until they were over the landing threshold. I didn't want to key up and give alternate instructions during a critical phase of flight as there was nothing unsafe about the situation at that time. The pilot was issued the Brasher by GC. The pilot called the tower and admitted after they landed they realized it was the wrong surface.”

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Wrong Surface Landings & Departures

Wrong surface landings and departures continue to occur across the NAS. Anecdotally, it seems every facility is susceptible to this type of occurrence.

Recently, there has been an uptick in aircraft departing from an intersection in the opposite direction to their takeoff clearance. A vast majority of these instances have happened when no other traffic was actively operating where the incident occurred. These lower levels of traffic and/or disruptions in normal habit patterns are believed to impact the flight crew's routine visual cues such as waiting for passing traffic, arriving or departing, and falling in “behind” that traffic.

Controllers and pilots must ensure to utilize prescribed phraseology, to be clear and concise, and ensure communications are received and properly understood. Heightened situational awareness is extremely critical in relation to runway usage for both departures and arrivals.

Controllers working positions other than Local Control can often see wrong turns on taxiways or runways, as well as incorrect actions in response to landing or departure clearances. Even when a controller believes the pilot is in a critical phase of flight, he/she should not be afraid to tell the pilot to go-around. Being actively engaged in the operation through effective scanning and teamwork can significantly reduce the potential for error. When needed, controllers should be able to ask for, offer, or accept help.

Reports received via ATSAP indicate a number of contributing factors, such as:

- ◇ Airport geometry
- ◇ Tower location
- ◇ Unfamiliarity
- ◇ Controller workload/complexity
- ◇ Expectation bias
- ◇ Combined positions
- ◇ Weather
- ◇ Hearback / Readback
- ◇ Scanning
- ◇ Student and foreign pilots
- ◇ Intersections increase odds that an aircraft will make the wrong turn for direction of departure

2-10-3. TOWER TEAM POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES

a. Tower Team Concept and Intent: There are no absolute divisions of responsibilities regarding position operations. The tasks to be completed remain the same whether one, two, or three people are working positions within a facility/sector. The team, as a whole, has responsibility for the safe and efficient operation of that facility/sector.

FAA Order JO 7110.65Y

Facility Discussion

- ✈ What techniques do you use to remain actively engaged in the operation, particularly when there is little to no traffic?
- ✈ When issuing unfamiliar or non-standard instructions to a pilot, what actions do you take to ensure the instructions are understood?
- ✈ What actions do you take when there is a potential indication of pilot confusion or uncertainty?

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