

AIRPORT CERTIFICATION INFORMATION BULLETIN



DATE: 04/07/2000, NUMBER: 00-03
Public Safety Personnel Operating in the Movement Area

Prevention of runway incursions is a top safety priority of the Federal Aviation Administration. During the past two months, there have been nine occurrences of public safety vehicles entering airport movement areas without authorization from the Airport Traffic Control Tower.

Police and other public safety personnel in the normal pursuit of their duties may have cause to enter and operate on airport movement areas (areas where aircraft taxi, takeoff, and land). While emergency vehicles operating on roadways have priority and right-of-way, this is not the case on runways and taxiways. **In movement areas, aircraft have priority and must be given the right-of-way at all times.**

To ensure the safety of the traveling public and public safety personnel, positive control of all aircraft and ground vehicles in movement areas must be maintained at all times. Public safety personnel that operate on airports should be informed that:

- **Assume that aircraft always have the right-of-way.**
- **Any vehicle operator, performing any mission in the movement area, must be in contact with, and under the control of the Airport Traffic Control Tower. At airports without an Airport Traffic Control Tower, or when the tower is closed, vehicle operators must monitor and announce position and intentions over the Common Traffic Advisory Frequency (CTAF).**
- **Even if the pilot sees the emergency vehicle, the speed and the movement of the aircraft could make yielding the right-of-way impossible or create a very dangerous situation. The large size of most aircraft used for commercial transportation limits the pilot's ability to maneuver quickly on the ground. Propellers and jet engines can cause significant damage, or even destroy a ground vehicle. Aircraft speeds (up to 150 miles per hour on runways) and restricted cockpit visibility which prohibits the pilot from seeing under the nose or behind the aircraft, also limit the ability of a pilot to avoid ground vehicles.**

To clarify these safety concerns, airport operators are requested to distribute this Certalert to the public safety departments that service their airports, including those that have entered into a mutual aid agreement with the airport. In addition, airport operators should distribute this Certalert to all public safety departments whose jurisdiction includes or is adjacent to the airport.