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So, what is Part 139?

How a Part 139 Airport Gets Certificated

You are probably familiar with the regulations pertaining to airman training and certification (14 CFR part 61) and flight operations (14 CFR part 91), but did you know that there is also a set of regulations for airports? That would be 14 CFR part 139, which outlines the standards for certification of the approximately 550 U.S. airports with commercial passenger service. Specifically, airports that host scheduled passenger-carrying operations using aircraft originally designed with more than nine passenger seats, or an unscheduled passenger-carrying operation using an aircraft originally designed with more than 30 passenger seats, must be certificated under part 139.

So what does an airport have to do to meet the standards of part 139? First, a part 139 airport must have an FAA-approved Airport Certification Manual, or ACM, that includes all items specified under section 139.203. These include self-inspection procedures, procedures to ensure safety during construction, and procedures for controlling pedestrians and vehicles in the movement area. Part 139 also outlines requirements for airport rescue and firefighting, emergency plans, and, where appropriate, a snow and ice control plan. Also, unlike many non-certificated airports that simply broadcast messages warning pilots of "deer and waterfowl in the vicinity of the airport," many part 139 airports must also have a wildlife hazard management plan. In addition to these plans, the part 139 certification process ensures that the airport has standardized runway safety areas, that it conforms to stringent lighting and marking standards, and that airport personnel receive proper training in airport operations.

Just as the FAA's Flight Standards Service deploys aviation safety inspectors to oversee compliance with standards for pilots and flight operations, the FAA's Airports Division employs a small, but very dedicated, staff of airport certification safety inspectors. Their work includes conducting annual inspections of each airport certified under 14 CFR 139. To call these employees "dedicated" is not simply a phrase. During the recent congressional funding lapse that furloughed nearly 4,000 FAA employees, including almost the entire staff of the FAA's Airports Division, a number of the FAA's airport certification safety inspectors remained on the job to ensure the continued operational safety of the nation's part 139 certificated airports.

As described in detail elsewhere in this issue of *FAA Safety Briefing*, the FAA's Airports Division also conducts extensive ongoing research to identify and deploy new technologies that will improve safety. These include enhanced markings, runway status lights, advanced radar systems, and Engineered Materials Arresting Systems (EMAS). EMAS is a true "good news" story because the EMAS system has arrested many aircraft from overrunning the runway, and is credited with saving lives.

What About the Rest?

As you may know, there are nearly 20,000 landing facilities in the United States, of which more than 5,000 are public-use airports. So what about airports whose operations do not require certification and inspection under part 139? Because they receive federal funding, many of the non-certificated airports that serve general aviation conform to grant assurances prescribed by the FAA for safety and environmental compliance. Also, local governments have responsibility for inspection and oversight of non-part 139 airports.

To learn more, please visit the Airports section of the FAA Web site: http://www.faa.gov/airports_airtraffic/airports/airport_safety/part139_cert/, and also see Mike Brown's "The Part 139 Advantage" in the November/December 2008 issue of *FAA Aviation News* (www.faa.gov/news/safety_briefing/2008/media/novdec2008.pdf) ✈

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