



SLCDA MAILING ADDRESS

Salt Lake City Department of Airports occasionally still receives delayed mail because folks are using the old mailing address. If you pay your bill with an online bill pay or bank, please make sure to change the address with that company or your payment will not be on time! The new address is:
PO Box 145550, Salt Lake City, UT 84114.

WINTER WONDERLAND?

By Dan Namowitz in AOPA Pilot Magazine

Every day's a weather day after the first snows of winter arrive in colder regions (read Utah). Now a whole set of conditions, accompanied by a cryptic stream of abbreviations to describe them, shows up in NOTAMs, regular and special surface weather reports, automatic terminal information service broadcasts (ATIS / AWOS), and verbally from the tower. After the season's first light dustings of snow give way to successive snow storms, accumulating snow depths, and snow-removal operations, pilots must inform themselves continually about runway, taxiway, and ramp conditions.

Quite frankly, the unwary and the unlucky will fall victim to traps that contaminated surfaces hold in store for aircraft. If you are a pilot who can't or won't let winter conditions keep you down, ramp up your efforts to proceed safely. Some object lessons in the pitfalls that have ensnared others are worth studying a bit.

A snow covered runway isn't just a slippery place for a takeoff or a landing, stealing traction when you need it most, as in crosswinds... It's also a place where aircraft performance is mysterious: The runway may not have been plowed full length and width, making its surface inconsistent and unpredictable, or if it's a grooved runway, it will drain better than one that isn't. Bottom line: Know what you've got out there and anticipate aircraft performance adjustments.

A snowy runway can be hard to spot from the air...a not-so-nice distraction on a tricky approach. Many airports don't plow all runways or taxiways. Get in trouble on a runway NOTAMed closed, or mired on a taxiway not maintained for winter use, and life gets complicated. Check the airport/facility directory's airport remarks for your destination. Then check NOTAMs for late developments.

No casual preflight research allowed here. Much information you'll need will be tucked away in obscure places. What are the weather conditions at the surface at your destination right now? To find out, you need to get the METAR (aviation routine meteorological report) or any SPECI (special report) for the airport. There's nothing poetic about a METAR; it's a string of symbols, codes, and shorthand that takes practice to comprehend.

What you most want to see about runways comes at the end of the METAR code stream, in the remarks (after the altimeter setting and separated from it by a slash). An example: SB15E40... this looks like a license plate number or someone's login password. Don't mistake it for a line of code only of interest to geeks. It says that snow began at 15 minutes after the hour and ended at 40 minutes past. Remarks include: SNOINCR 1/8. Snow increased an inch in the past hour, and there are 8 inches on the ground. Show me where you'd look in your pilot's operating handbook to know how your aircraft performs when taking off on 8 inches of snows.

Along with snowstorms come snow removal operations. When you arrive, these snow ops may not be complete. During a briefing, or when checking NOTAMs enroute or from an ATIS broadcast, you may learn that one or more runways are closed for snow removal. Or that some time is required before you can land. That's known as a PPR time, say, 20 minutes prior permission required.

Even if the runway is available there may still be, in NOTAM language, PSR (packed snow on the runway). There could be snow-removal equipment in proximity. Some of these vehicles are huge; most have flashing lights. Occasionally someone doesn't get the word that it's time to let the aircraft land again, so be ready to make that out-of-the-flare go-around.

FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT HOTLINES

Report All Suspicious Aviation Activities:

1-866-AIR-BUST or 1-866-GA-SECUR

If braking advisories are in effect, monitor whether runways have BRAG, BRAF, BRAP, or BRAN-NOTAM contractions telling you that braking action is good, fair, poor, or nil. A pilot once read me some weather and construed the N in BRAN for normal instead of nil. Review those contractions! Note whether the report was given by a pilot of an aircraft that recently landed... and of what type... or by a ground vehicle.

That's the planning side. But winter weather moves fast. Information also arrives during airborne updates; you'll use it to cope with changing conditions. As with any NOTAM or PIREP, when the report originated is as important as what it says. Then consider how the weather has been behaving since the report was filed. Is it better? ...worse? Traps still may loom. After landing on a sunny day on a runway contaminated by refrozen, melted snow from a recent storm, one may find oneself perched atop glare ice, unable to maneuver off the runway and onto a taxiway. Taxiing may be treacherous and slow. Be aware... and be prepared.

Update those charts... The combination of expired charts and blowing snow doesn't spell trouble...until a frequency for activating the runway lights changes.

Just type "snow" as a search parameter into the ASRS database query tool... your screen will fill up with reports. Snow is not always the primary culprit in mishaps, often it is just the tip of the hazard iceberg. See what causes accidents at an airport by checking accident reports in the AOPA Air Safety Foundation Accident Database www.asf.org/database or by using AOPA's Airport Directory feature online by visiting www.aopa.org/members/airports, which provides a link to accident reports associated with individual airports.

Yes, it's a winter wonderland out there. Minding the hazards will keep your N number out of the databases that track keyword combinations such as "snow" and "aircraft."

ELECTRONIC GA NEWS

If you would like to be on the electronic GA News mailing list, send an e-mail request with the e-mail address to which you'd like the monthly newsletter sent to steve.jackson@slcgov.com

TVY ILS NEARS COMPLETION

The ILS and localizer approach at the Tooele Valley Airport has been successfully flight tested by the FAA. The FAA NAVAID maintenance folks are required to perform a joint acceptance inspection to certify that it meets all requirements before it is commissioned and

HELPFUL POINTS OF CONTACT

For GA operational, facilities maintenance, aviation newsletter, airfield, and SLC Title 16 questions call: Steve Jackson, SLCDA General Aviation Manager, 647-5532 or e-mail at steve.jackson@slcgov.com.

For hangar lease and repair questions call: Mike Rawson, Properties Management Specialist, at 575-2894 or e-mail at mike.rawson@slcgov.com.

For aviation security questions call: Connie Proctor at 575-2401.
For gate access problems call: Airport Control Center at 575-2401.

For emergencies call: at SLCIA, 575-2405
at TVY or U42, 911 then 575-2405

For common General Aviation information call the GA Hotline: 575-2443

fully available for public use.

A portion of that JAI has been completed and the remaining sections are scheduled to be completed by mid-January. Our hopes are high that you will be able to shoot ILS and localizer approaches before 1 February.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Leading Edge Aviation Logan (LGU) - Leading Edge Aviation has a free breakfast in their hangar on the 2nd Saturday of each month from 8:00 am to 10:00 am. They'd enjoy seeing you there. For more information about Leading Edge and its events, visit www.leaviation.com.

Local FAA Seminars The National Aeronautical Charting Office is conducting a series of IFR chart seminars during January. Aeronautical charts and publications contain a wealth of information. Some of that information has never been taught or has been quickly forgotten. Understanding chart information can save time, money and sometimes lives. The seminar is designed for student through ATP pilots. VFR chart seminars are coming in March.

Locations & Dates: Westminster College, Salt Lake City- Jan 12; Utah Valley University, Orem- Jan 13; Utah State University, Logan - Jan 14; Salt Lake Airport 2, Jan 15.

Flight Instructor Preparation - This is an all day course on Saturday Jan 31 at the Executive Terminal at SLC it is designed to prepare applicants for the initial Flight Instructor rating.

Times, directions and additional information may found at faasafety.gov under events/seminars or contact Dennis Seals, FAA Safety Program Manager, at 801-257-5056.

Do not leave unattended space heaters or aircraft engine heaters operating in hangars.

Have a Happy and Safe New Year!