

TALKING POINTS **THE AIRPORT ROLE IN AVIATION SAFETY**

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Airport Industry Position

Maintaining the safety and security of the traveling public and airport workers is an airport's top priority. Airports have a critical and irreplaceable safety role in the national airspace system, which has been broadly recognized as the safest and most complex in the world.

High Level Airport Talking Points

When it comes to safety, airports are chiefly responsible for ensuring that airport infrastructure enables safe aircraft operations on the ground and during landing and takeoff.

Airport responsibilities also extend beyond airport boundaries and include protecting the approach and departure corridors in the vicinity of the airport from natural and man-made obstructions and wildlife hazards.

We look forward to ongoing work with all of our aviation safety partners to improve the margins of safety in the national airspace system.

It's a time-honored adage that safety is a journey and not a destination. U.S. airports are committed to this journey. Our communities and the travelers we serve deserve nothing less.

Meeting and Maintaining Federal Safety Requirements

For decades, U.S. commercial service airports have maintained extensive safety programs that meet and often exceed stringent federal requirements. Part 139 commercial service airports safety requirements are [set by the Federal Aviation Administration](#).

Airport safety requirements include regular inspections of runways, taxiways, aprons, and lighting systems; runway condition reporting; the provision of aircraft rescue and firefighting services; regular emergency response exercises and comprehensive emergency planning; wildlife monitoring and mitigation activities; snow and ice clearance; obstruction management; and airside driver training.

Airfield Safety Investments

Safety considerations have informed how airports design and refine airfield infrastructure, with particular focus on complex airfield geometry, runway crossings, and deconflicting aircraft and ground vehicle movements.

Over the past decade, airports have invested billions of dollars in safety, airfield maintenance, and lighting maintenance projects that help to ensure safe operation of the U.S. National Airspace System. These investments—which have been made in concert with the FAA with federal assistance—include the ongoing Runway Incursion Mitigation (RIM) program and the preceding Runway Safety Area program.

Safety Management Systems

With Safety Management Systems (SMS), many airports have moved forward with performance-based, data driven safety management capabilities.

Through SMS, airports are able to identify emerging safety issues proactively, before incidents or accidents occur.

Airports able to use SMS to coordinate and collaborate with the FAA, airlines, and airside service providers on our shared safety priorities. These SMS programs will become standard operating practices for all U.S. certificated airports over the next three to four years.

Safety Coordination and Collaboration with Partners

Airport safety roles and responsibilities must be collaborative and cooperative with FAA air traffic, flight operators—inclusive of airlines, business aviation, general aviation, and airside service providers.

Despite this collaboration, our role as an airport operator limits what we're able to do in the case of safety incidents that the FAA terms "pilot deviations" and "operational errors", which stem from pilot and air traffic controller actions, respectively. When such incidents occur, we do actively participate in FAA and National Transportation Safety Board investigations and, when appropriate, take actions to prevent these incidents from happening in the future.