

GLOSSARY OF AVIATION TERMS

The following glossary of aviation terms was compiled from a variety of aviation industry sources.

Above Ground Level (AGL) – As measured above the ground; used to identify heights of built items (towers, etc.) on aeronautical charts in terms of absolute height above the ground.

Accelerate Stop Distance Available (ASDA) – The length of the takeoff run available plus the length of a stopway, when available.

Agricultural Aviation – The use of fixed-wing or rotor-wing aircraft in the aerial application of agricultural products (i.e., fertilizers, pesticides, etc.).

Air Cargo – All commercial air express and air freight with the exception of airmail and parcel post.

Air Carrier/Airline – All regularly scheduled airline activity performed by airlines certificated in accordance with Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR Part 121).

Air Taxi – Operations of aircraft “for hire” for specific trips, commonly referred to as aircraft available for charter (FAR Part 135).

Aircraft Approach Category – Grouping of aircraft based on the speed they are traveling when configured for landing (typically 1.3 times the aircraft stall speed in landing configuration). As a rule of thumb, slower approach speeds mean smaller airport dimensions and faster approach speeds require larger dimensions. The aircraft approach categories are:

- Category A - Speed less than 91 knots;
- Category B - Speed 91 knots or more but less than 121 knots
- Category C - Speed 121 knots or more but less than 141 knots
- Category D - Speed 141 knots or more but less than 166 knots
- Category E - Speed 166 knots or more

Aircraft Holding Area – An area typically located adjacent to a taxiway and runway end designed to accommodate aircraft prior to departure (for pre-takeoff engine checks, instrument flight plan clearances, etc.). Per FAA design standards, aircraft holding areas should be located outside the runway safety area (RSA) and obstacle free zone (OFZ) and aircraft located in the holding area should not interfere with normal taxiway use (taxiway object free area). Sometimes referred to as holding bays or “elephant ear.” Smaller areas (aircraft turnarounds) are used to facilitate aircraft movement on runways without exit taxiways or where back-taxiing is required.

Aircraft Operation – A landing or takeoff is one operation. An aircraft that takes off and then lands creates two aircraft operations.

Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) – A general aviation organization.

Aircraft Parking Line (APL) – A setback depicted on an ALP or other drawings that defines the minimum separation between aircraft parking areas and an adjacent runway or taxiway. The APL dimension reflects runway and taxiway clearances (object free area, etc.) and FAR Part 77 airspace surface clearance (transitional surface penetrations) for parked aircraft. Typically the tail height of the parked aircraft is used to determine adequate clearance for the transitional surface.

Airplane Design Group – A grouping of airplanes based on wingspan and tail height. As with Approach Category, the wider the wingspan, the bigger the aircraft is, the more room it takes up for operating on an airport. The Airplane Design Groups are:

- Group I: Up to but not including 49 feet or tail height up to but not including 20 feet.
- Group II: 49 feet up to but not including 79 feet or tail height from 20 up to but not including 30 feet.
- Group III: 79 feet up to but not including 118 feet or tail height from 30 up to but not including 45 feet.
- Group IV: 118 feet up to but not including 171 feet or tail height from 45 up to but not including 60 feet.
- Group V: 171 feet up to but not including 214 feet or tail height from 60 up to but not including 66 feet.
- Group VI: 214 feet up to but not including 262 feet or tail height from 66 up to but not including 80 feet.

Airport - A landing area regularly used by aircraft for receiving or discharging passengers or cargo, including heliports and seaplane bases.

Airport Beacon (also Rotating Beacon) – A visual navigational aid that displays alternating green and white flashes for a lighted land airport and white for an unlighted land airport.

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Airports District Office (ADO) – The local” office of the FAA that coordinates planning and construction projects. The Seattle ADO is responsible for airports located in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho.

Airport Improvement Program (AIP) – The funding program administered by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) with user fees which are dedicated to improvement of the national airport system. This program currently provides 95% of funding for eligible airport improvement projects. The local sponsor of the project (i.e., airport owner) provides the remaining 5% known as the "match."

Airport Layout Plan (ALP) – The FAA approved drawing which shows the existing and anticipated layout of an airport for the next 20 years. An ALP is prepared using FAA design standards. Future development projects must be consistent with the ALP to be eligible for FAA funding. ALP drawings are typically updated every 7 to 10 years to reflect significant changes, or as needed.

Airport Reference Code (ARC) – An FAA airport coding system that is defined based on the critical or design aircraft for an airport or individual runway. The ARC is an alpha-numeric code based on aircraft approach speed and airplane wingspan (see definitions in glossary). The ARC is used to determine the appropriate design standards for runways, taxiways, and other associated facilities. An airport designed to accommodate a Piper Cub (an A-I aircraft) requires less room than an airport designed to accommodate a Boeing 747 (a D-V aircraft).

Airport Reference Point (ARP) – The approximate mid-point of an airfield that is designated as the official airport location.

Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) – On airport emergency response required for certificated commercial service airports (see FAR Part 139).

Airside – The portion of an airport that includes aircraft movement areas (runways, taxiways, etc.)

Airspace – The area above the ground in which aircraft travel. It is divided into enroute and terminal airspace, with corridors, routes, and restricted zones established for the control and safety of air traffic.

Alternate Airport – An airport that is available for landing when the intended airport becomes unavailable. Required for instrument flight planning in the event that weather conditions at destination airport fall below approach minimums (cloud ceiling or visibility).

Annual Service Volume (ASV) – An estimate of how many aircraft operations an airport can handle based upon the number, type and configuration of runways, aircraft mix (large vs. small, etc.), instrumentation, and weather conditions with a “reasonable” amount of delay. ASV is a primary planning standard used to determine when a runway (or an airport) is nearing its capacity, and may require new runways or taxiways. As operations levels approach ASV, the amount of delay per operation increases; once ASV is exceeded, “excessive” delay generally exists.

Approach End of Runway - The end of the runway used for landing. Pilots generally land into the wind and choose a runway end that best aligns with the wind.

Approach Light System (ALS) – Configurations of lights positioned symmetrically beyond the runway threshold and the extended runway centerline. The ALS visually augments the electronic navigational aids for the runway.

Approach Reference Code (APRC) – The APRC is composed of three components: AAC, ADG, and visibility minimums. Visibility minimums are expressed as Runway Visual Range (RVR) values in feet of 1600, 2400, 4000, and 5000 (nominally corresponding to lower than 1/2 mile, lower than 3/4 mile but not lower than 1/2 mile, not lower than 3/4 mile, and not lower than one mile, respectively).

Approach Surface (Also FAR Part 77 Approach) – An imaginary (invisible) surface that rises and extends from the ends of a runway to provide an unobstructed path for aircraft to land or take off. The size and slope of the approach surface vary depending upon the size of aircraft that are accommodated and the approach capabilities (visual or instrument).

Apron - An area on an airport designated for the parking, loading, fueling, or servicing of aircraft (also referred to as tarmac and ramp).

Aqueous Film Forming Foam (AFFF) – A primary fire-fighting agent that is used to create a blanket that smothers flame or prevents ignition (fuel spills, etc.). AFFF is also used to foam runways during emergency landings.

Asphalt or Asphaltic Concrete (AC) – Flexible oil-based pavement used for airfield facilities (runways, taxiways, aircraft parking apron, etc.); also commonly used for road construction.

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Automated Surface Observation System (ASOS) and Automated Weather Observation System (AWOS) – Automated observation systems providing continuous on-site weather data, designed to support aviation activities and weather forecasting.

AVGAS – Highly refined gasoline used in airplanes with piston engines. The current grade of AVGAS available is 100 Octane Low Lead (100LL).

Avigation Easement – A grant of property interest (airspace) over land to ensure unobstructed flight. Typically acquired by airport owners to protect the integrity of runway approaches. Restrictions typically include maximum height limitations for natural (trees, etc.) or built items, but may also address permitted land uses by the owner of the underlying land that are compatible with airport operations.

Back-Taxiing – The practice of aircraft taxiing on a runway before takeoff or after landing, normally, in the opposite direction of the runway's traffic pattern. Back-taxiing is generally required on runways without taxiway access to both runway ends.

Based Aircraft – Aircraft permanently stationed at an airport usually through some form of agreement with the airport owner. Used as a measure of activity at an airport.

Capacity – A measure of the maximum number of aircraft operations that can be accommodated on the runways of an airport in an hour.

Ceiling – The height above the ground or water to base of the lowest cloud layers covering more than 50 percent of the sky.

Charter – Operations of aircraft “for hire” for specific trips, commonly referred to an aircraft available for charter.

Circle to Land or Circling Approach – An instrument approach procedure that allows pilots to “circle” the airfield to land on any authorized runway once visual contact with the runway environment is established and maintained throughout the procedure.

Commercial Service Airport – An airport designed and constructed to serve scheduled or unscheduled commercial airlines. Commercial service airports are certified under FAR Part 139.

Common Traffic Advisory Frequency (CTAF) – A frequency used by pilots to communicate and obtain airport advisories at an uncontrolled airport.

Complimentary Fire Extinguishing Agent – Fire extinguishing agents that provide rapid fire suppression, which may be used in conjunction with principal agents (e.g., foam). Examples include sodium-based and potassium-based dry chemicals, Halocarbons, and Carbon dioxide. Also recommended for electrical and metal fires where water-based foams are not used. Complimentary agents are paired with principal agents based on their compatibility of use.

Conical Surface – One of the FAR Part 77 “Imaginary” Surfaces. The conical surface extends outward and upward from the edge of the horizontal surface at a slope of 20:1 to a horizontal distance of 4,000 feet.

Controlling Obstruction – The highest obstruction relative to a defined plane of airspace (i.e., approach surface, etc.).

Critical Aircraft – Aircraft which controls one or more design items based on wingspan, approach speed and/or maximum certificated take-off weight. The same aircraft may not be critical to all design items (i.e., runway length, pavement strength, etc.). Also referred to as “design aircraft.”

Crosswind – Wind direction that is not parallel to the runway or the path of an aircraft.

Crosswind Runway – An additional runway (secondary, tertiary, etc.) that provides wind coverage not adequately provided by the primary runway. Crosswind runways are generally eligible for FAA funding when a primary runway accommodates less than 95 percent of documented wind conditions (see wind rose).

Decision Height (DH) – For precision instrument approaches, the height (typically in feet or meters above runway end touchdown zone elevation) at which a decision to land or execute a missed approach must be made by the pilot.

Declared Distances – The distances the airport owner declares available for airplane operations (e.g., takeoff run, takeoff distance, accelerate-stop distance, and landing distance). In cases where runways meet all FAA design criteria without modification, declared distances equal the total runway length. In cases where any declared distances are less than full runway length, the dimension should be published in the FAA Airport/Facility Directory (A/FD).

Departure Reference Code (DPRC) – The DPRC represents aircraft that can take off from a runway while any aircraft are present on adjacent taxiways, under particular meteorological conditions with no special operational procedures necessary.

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Departure Surface – A surface that extends upward from the departure end of an instrument runway that should be free of any obstacle penetrations. For instrument runways other than air carrier, the slope is 40:1, extending 10,200 feet from the runway end. Air carrier runways have a similar surface designed for one-engine inoperative conditions with a slope of 62.5: 1.

Design Aircraft – Aircraft which controls one or more design items based on wingspan, approach speed and/or maximum certificated takeoff weight. The same aircraft may not represent the design aircraft for all design items (i.e., runway length, pavement strength, etc.). Also referred to as “critical aircraft.”

Displaced Threshold – A landing threshold located at a point other than on the runway end, usually provided to mitigate close-in obstructions to runway approaches for landing aircraft. The area between the runway end and the displaced threshold accommodates aircraft taxi and takeoff, but not landing.

Distance Measuring Equipment (DME) – Equipment that provides electronic distance information to enroute or approaching aircraft from a land-based transponder that sends and receives pulses of fixed duration and separation. The ground stations are typically co-located with VORs, but they can also be co-located with an ILS.

Distance Remaining Signs – Airfield signs that indicate to pilots the amount of useable runway remaining in 1,000-foot increments. The signs are located along the side of the runway, visible for each direction of runway operation.

DNL – Day-night sound levels, a mathematical method of measuring noise exposure based on cumulative, rather than single event impacts. Night time operations (10pm to 7AM) are assessed a noise penalty to reflect the increased noise sensitivity that exists during normal hours of rest. Previously referred to as Ldn.

Easement – An agreement that provides use or access of land or airspace (see aviation easement) in exchange for compensation.

Enplanements – Domestic, territorial, and international revenue passengers who board an aircraft in the states in scheduled and non-scheduled service of aircraft in intrastate, interstate, and foreign commerce and includes intransit passengers (passengers on board international flights that transit an airport in the US for non-traffic purposes).

Entitlements – Distribution of Airport Improvement Plan (AIP) funds by FAA from the Airport & Airways Trust Fund to commercial service airport sponsors based on passenger enplanements or cargo volumes and smaller fixed amounts for general aviation airports (Non-Primary Entitlements).

Experimental Aircraft – See homebuilt aircraft.

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) – The FAA is the branch of the U.S. Department of Transportation that is responsible for the development of airports and air navigation systems.

FAR Part 77 – Federal Air Regulations (FAR) which establish standards for determining obstructions in navigable airspace and defines imaginary (airspace) surfaces for airports and heliports that are designed to prevent hazards to air navigation. FAR Part 77 surfaces include approach, primary, transitional, horizontal, and conical surfaces. The dimensions of surfaces can vary with the runway classification (large or small airplanes) and approach type of each runway end (visual, non-precision instrument, precision instrument). The slope of an approach surface also varies by approach type and runway classification. FAR Part 77 also applies to helicopter landing areas.

FAR Part 139 – Federal Aviation Regulations which establish standards for airports with scheduled passenger commercial air service. Airports accommodating scheduled passenger service with aircraft more than 9 passenger seats must be certified as a “Part 139” airport. Airports that are not certified under Part 139 may accommodate scheduled commercial passenger service with aircraft having 9 passenger seats or less.

Final Approach Fix (FAF) – The fix (location) from which the final instrument approach to an airport is executed; also identifies beginning of final approach segment.

Final Approach Point (FAP) – For non-precision instrument approaches, the point at which an aircraft is established inbound for the approach and where the final descent may begin.

Fixed Base Operator (FBO) – An individual or company located at an airport providing aviation services. Sometimes further defined as a “full service” FBO or a limited service. Full service FBOs typically provide a broad range of services (flight instruction, aircraft rental, charter, fueling, repair, etc.) where a limited service FBO provides only one or two services (such as fueling, flight instruction or repair).

Fixed Wing – A plane with one or more “fixed wings,” as opposed to a helicopter that utilizes a rotary wing.

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Flexible Pavement – Typically constructed with an asphalt surface course and one or more layers of base and subbase courses that rest on a subgrade layer.

Flight Service Station (FSS) – FAA or contracted service for pilots to contact (on the ground or in the air) to get weather and airport information. Flight plans are also filed with the FSS.

General Aviation (GA) – All civil (non-military) aviation operations other than scheduled air services and non-scheduled air transport operations for hire.

Glide Slope (GS) – For precision instrument approaches, such as an instrument landing system (ILS), the component that provides electronic vertical guidance to aircraft.

Global Positioning System (GPS) – GPS is a system of navigating which uses multiple satellites to establish the location and altitude of an aircraft with a high degree of accuracy. GPS supports both enroute flight and instrument approach procedures.

Helicopter Landing Pad (Helipad) – A designated landing area for rotor wing aircraft. Requires protected FAR Part 77 imaginary surfaces, as defined for heliports (FAR Part 77.29).

Helicopter Parking Area – A designated area for rotor wing aircraft parking that is typically accessed via hover-taxi or ground taxiing from a designated landing area (e.g., helipad or runway-taxiway system). If not used as a designated landing area, helicopter parking pads do not require dedicated FAR Part 77 imaginary surfaces.

Heliport – A designated helicopter landing facility (as defined by FAR Part 77).

Height Above Airport (HAA) – The height of the published minimum descent altitude (MDA) above the published airport elevation. This is normally published in conjunction with circling minimums.

High Intensity Runway Lights (HIRL) – High intensity (i.e., very bright) lights are used on instrument runways to help pilots to see the runway when visibility is poor.

High Speed (Taxiway) Exit – An acute-angled exit taxiway extending from a runway to an adjacent parallel taxiway which allows landing aircraft to exit the runway at a higher rate of speed than is possible with standard (90-degree) exit taxiways.

Hold Line (Aircraft Hold Line) – Pavement markings located on taxiways that connect to runways, indicating where aircraft should stop before entering runway environment. At controlled

airports, air traffic control clearance is required to proceed beyond a hold line. At uncontrolled airports, pilots are responsible for ensuring that a runway is clear prior to accessing for takeoff.

Hold/Holding Procedure – A defined maneuver in controlled airspace that allows aircraft to circle above a fixed point (often over a navigational aid or GPS waypoint) and altitude while awaiting further clearance from air traffic control.

Home Built Aircraft - An aircraft built by an amateur from a kit or specific design (not an FAA certified factory built aircraft). The aircraft built under the supervision of an FAA-licensed mechanic and are certified by FAA as “Experimental.”

Horizontal Surface - One of the FAR Part 77 Imaginary (invisible) Surfaces. The horizontal surface is an imaginary flat surface 150 feet above the established airport elevation (typically the highest point on the airfield). Its perimeter is constructed by swinging arcs (circles) from each runway end and connecting the arcs with straight lines. The oval-shaped horizontal surface connects to other Part 77 surfaces extending upward from the runway and also beyond its perimeter.

Initial Approach Point/Fix (IAP/IAF) – For instrument approaches, a designated point where an aircraft may begin the approach procedure.

Instrument Approach Procedure (IAP) – A series of defined maneuvers designed to enable the safe transition between enroute instrument flight and landing under instrument flight conditions at a particular airport or heliport. IAPs define specific requirements for aircraft altitude, course, and missed approach procedures. See precision or non-precision instrument approach.

Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) – IFR refers to the set of rules pilots must follow when they are flying in bad weather. Pilots are required to follow these rules when operating in controlled airspace with visibility (ability to see in front of themselves) of less than three miles and/or ceiling (a layer of clouds) lower than 1,000 feet.

Instrument Landing System (ILS) – An ILS is an electronic navigational aid system that guides aircraft for a landing in bad weather. Classified as a precision instrument approach, it is designed to provide a precise approach path for course alignment and vertical descent of aircraft. Generally consists of a localizer, glide slope, outer marker, and middle marker. ILS runways are generally equipped with an approach lighting system (ALS) to maximize approach capabilities. A Category I ILS allows aircraft to descend as low as 200 feet above runway elevation with ½ mile visibility.

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Instrument Meteorological Conditions (IMC) – Meteorological conditions expressed in terms of visibility, distance from clouds, and ceiling less than minima specified for visual meteorological conditions.

Instrument Runway – A runway equipped with electronic navigational aids that accommodate straight-in precision or non-precision instrument approaches.

Itinerant Operation – All aircraft operations at an airport other than local, i.e., flights that come in from another airport.

Jet Fuel – Highly refined grade of kerosene used by turbine engine aircraft. Jet-A is currently the common commercial grade of jet fuel.

Knot (Nautical Mile) – one nautical mile = 1.152 statute miles.

Landing Area – That part of the movement area intended for the landing and takeoff of aircraft.

Landing Distance Available (LDA) – The length of runway which is available and suitable for the ground run of an airplane landing.

Landside – The portion of an airport that includes aircraft parking areas, fueling, hangars, airport terminal area facilities, vehicle parking and other associated facilities.

Larger than Utility Runway – As defined under FAR Part 77, a runway designed and constructed to serve large planes (aircraft with maximum takeoff weights greater than 12,500 pounds).

Ldn – Noise measurement metric (see DNL)

Left Traffic – A term used to describe which side of a runway the airport traffic pattern is located. Left traffic indicates that the runway will be to the pilot's left when in the traffic pattern. Left traffic is standard unless otherwise noted in facility directories at a particular airport.

Large Aircraft – An aircraft with a maximum takeoff weight more than 12,500 lbs.

Light Sport Aircraft (LSA) – A basic aircraft certified by FAA that can be flown by pilots with limited flight training (Sport Pilot certificates), but also provide lower cost access to basic aircraft for all pilot levels. LSA design limits include maximum a gross takeoff weight of 1,320 pounds (land planes) and a maximum of two seats.

Local Area Augmentation System (LAAS) – GPS-based instrument approach that utilizes ground-based systems to augment satellite coverage to provide vertical (glideslope) and horizontal (course) guidance.

Local Operation – Aircraft operation in the traffic pattern or within sight of the tower, or aircraft known to be departing or arriving from flight in local practice areas, or aircraft executing practice instrument approaches at the airport.

Localizer – The component of an instrument landing system (ILS) that provides electronic lateral (course) guidance to aircraft. Also used to support non-precision localizer approaches.

LORAN C – A navigation system using land based radio signals, which indicates position and ground speed, but not elevation. (See GPS)

Localizer Performance with Vertical Guidance (LPV) – Satellite navigation (SATNAV) based GPS approaches providing “near category I” precision approach capabilities with course and vertical guidance. LPV approaches are expected to eventually replace traditional step-down, VOR and NDB procedures by providing a constant, ILS glideslope-like descent path. LPV approaches use high-accuracy WAAS signals, which allow narrower glideslope and approach centerline obstacle clearance areas.

Magnetic Declination – Also called magnetic variation, is the angle between magnetic north and true north. Declination is considered positive east of true north and negative when west. Magnetic declination changes over time and with location. Runway end numbers, which reflect the magnetic heading/alignment (within 5 degrees +/-) occasionally require change due to declination.

MALSR – Medium-intensity Approach Lighting System with Runway alignment indicator lights. An approach lighting system (ALS) which provides visual guidance to landing aircraft.

Medevac – Fixed wing or rotor-wing aircraft used to transport critical medical patients. These aircraft are equipped to provide life support during transport.

Medium Intensity Runway Lights (MIRL) – Runway edge lights which are not as intense as HIRLs (high intensity runway lights). Typical at medium and smaller airports which do not have sophisticated instrument landing systems.

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Microwave Landing System (MLS) – An instrument landing system operating in the microwave spectrum, which provides lateral and vertical guidance to aircraft with compatible equipment. Originally developed as the “next-generation” replacement for the ILS, the FAA discontinued the MLS program in favor of GPS-based systems.

Minimum Descent Altitude (MDA) – The lowest altitude in a non-precision instrument approach that an aircraft may descend without establishing visual contact with the runway or airport environment.

Minimums – Weather condition requirements established for a particular operation or type of operation.

Missed Approach Procedure – A prescribed maneuver conducted by a pilot when an instrument approach cannot be completed to a landing. Usually requires aircraft to climb from the airport environment to a specific holding location where another approach can be executed or the aircraft can divert to another airport.

Missed Approach Point (MAP) – The defined location in a non-precision instrument approach where the procedure must be terminated if the pilot has not visually established the runway or airport environment.

Movement Area – The runways, taxiways and other areas of the airport used for taxiing, takeoff and landing of aircraft, i.e., for aircraft movement.

MSL - Elevation above Mean Sea Level.

National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS) – The NPIAS is the federal airport classification system that includes public use airports that meet specific eligibility and activity criteria. A “NPIAS designation” is required for an airport to be eligible to receive FAA funding for airport projects.

Navigational Aid (Navaid) – Any visual or electronic device that helps a pilot navigate. Can be for use to land at an airport or for traveling from point A to point B.

Noise Contours – Continuous lines of equal noise level usually drawn around a noise source, such as runway, highway or railway. The lines are generally plotted in 5-decibel increments, with higher noise levels located nearer the noise source, and lesser exposure levels extending away from the source.

Non-Directional Beacon (NDB) – Non-Directional Beacon which transmits a signal on which a pilot may “home” using equipment installed in the aircraft.

Non-Precision Instrument (NPI) Approach - A non-precision instrument approach provides horizontal (course) guidance to pilots for landing. NPI approaches often involve a series of “step down” sequences where aircraft descend in increments (based on terrain clearance), rather than following a continuous glide path. The pilot is responsible for maintaining altitude control between approach segments since no “vertical” guidance is provided.

Obstacle Clearance Surface (OCS) – As defined by FAA, an approach surface that is used in conjunction with alternative threshold siting/clearing criteria to mitigate obstructions within runway approach surfaces. Dimensions, slope and placement depend on runway type and approach capabilities. Also known as Obstacle Clearance Approach (OCA).

Obstruction – An object (tree, house, road, phone pole, etc.) that penetrates an imaginary surface described in FAR Part 77.

Obstruction Chart (OC) – A chart that depicts surveyed obstructions that penetrate a FAR Part 77 imaginary surface surrounding an airport. OC charts are developed by the National Ocean Service (NOS) based on a comprehensive survey that provides detailed location (latitude/longitude coordinates) and elevation data in addition to critical airfield data.

Parallel Taxiway – A taxiway that is aligned parallel to a runway, with connecting taxiways to allow efficient movement of aircraft between the runway and taxiway. The parallel taxiway effectively separates taxiing aircraft from arriving and departing aircraft located on the runway. Used to increase runway capacity and improve safety.

Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) – A user fee charged by commercial service airports for enplaning passengers. Airports must apply to the FAA and meet certain requirements in order to impose a PFC.

Pavement Condition Index (PCI) – A scale of 0-100 that is used to rate airfield pavements ranging from failed to excellent based on visual inspection. Future PCIs can be predicted based on pavement type, age, condition and use as part of a pavement maintenance program.

Pavement Strength or Weight Bearing Capacity – The design limits of airfield pavement expressed in maximum aircraft weight for specific and landing gear configurations (i.e., single wheel, dual wheel, etc.) Small general aviation airport pavements are typically designed to accommodate aircraft weighing up to 12,500 pounds with a single-wheel landing gear.

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Portland Cement Concrete (PCC) – Rigid pavement used for airfield facilities (runways, taxiways, aircraft parking, helipads, etc.).

Precision Approach Path Indicator (PAPI) – A system of lights located by the approach end of a runway that provides visual approach slope guidance to aircraft during approach to landing. The lights typically show green if a pilot is on the correct flight path, and turn red if a pilot is too low.

Precision Instrument Runway (PIR) – A runway equipped with a “precision” instrument approach (descent and course guidance), which allows aircraft to land in bad weather.

Precision Instrument Approach – An instrument approach that provides electronic lateral (course) and vertical (descent) guidance to a runway end. A non-precision instrument approach typically provides only course guidance and the pilot is responsible for managing defined altitude assignments at designated points within the approach.

Primary Runway – That runway which provides the best wind coverage, etc., and receives the most usage at the airport.

Primary Surface – One of the FAR Part 77 Imaginary Surfaces, the primary surface is centered on top of the runway and extends 200 feet beyond each end. The width is from 250' to 1,000' wide depending upon the type of airplanes using the runway.

Principal Fire Extinguishing Agent – Fire extinguishing agents that provide permanent control of fire through a fire-smothering foam blanket. Examples include protein foam, aqueous film forming foam and fluoroprotein foam.

Procedure Turn (PT) – A maneuver in which a turn is made away from a designated track followed by a turn in an opposite direction to permit an aircraft to intercept the track in the opposite direction (usually inbound).

Area Navigation (RNAV) – is a method of instrument flight navigation that allows an aircraft to choose a course within a network of navigation beacons rather than navigating directly to and from the beacons. Originally developed in the 1960, RNAV elements are now being integrated into GPS-based navigation.

Relocated Threshold – A runway threshold (takeoff and landing point) that is located at a point other than the (original) runway end. Usually provided to mitigate nonstandard runway safety area (RSA) dimensions beyond a runway end. When a runway threshold is relocated, the published length of the runway is reduced and the pavement between the relocated threshold and to the original end of the

runway is not available for aircraft takeoff or landing. This pavement is typically marked as taxiway, marked as unusable, or is removed.

Required Navigation Performance (RNP) – A type of performance-based navigation system that allows an aircraft to fly a specific path between two 3-dimensionally defined points in space. RNP approaches require on-board performance monitoring and alerting. RNP also refers to the level of performance required for a specific procedure or a specific block of airspace. For example, an RNP of .3 means the aircraft navigation system must be able to calculate its position to within a circle with a radius of 3 tenths of a nautical mile. RNP approaches have been designed with RNP values down to .1, which allow aircraft to follow precise 3 dimensional curved flight paths through congested airspace, around noise sensitive areas, or through difficult terrain.

Rigid Pavement – Typically constructed of Portland cement concrete (PCC), consisting of a slab placed on a prepared layer of imported materials.

Rotorcraft – A helicopter.

Runway – A defined area intended to accommodate aircraft takeoff and landing. Runways may be paved (asphalt or concrete) or unpaved (gravel, turf, dirt, etc.), depending on use. Water runways are defined takeoff and landing areas for use by seaplanes.

Runway Bearing – The angle of a runway centerline expressed in degrees (east or west) relative to true north.

Runway Design Code (RDC) – The RDC is comprised of the AAC, ADG, and approach visibility minimums of a particular runway. The RDC provides the information needed to determine applicable design standards. The AAC is based on aircraft approach speed. The ADG is based on either the aircraft wingspan or tail height; (whichever is most restrictive) of the largest aircraft expected to operate on the runway and taxiways adjacent to the runway. The approach visibility minimums represent RVR values in feet of 1,200, 1,600, 2,400, 4,000, and 5,000 (corresponding to lower than 1/4 mile, lower than 1/2 mile but not lower than 1/4 mile, lower than 3/4 mile but not lower than 1/2 mile, lower than 1 mile but not lower than 3/4 mile, and not lower than 1 mile, respectively).

Runway Designation Numbers – Numbers painted on the ends of a runway indicating runway orientation (in degrees) relative to magnetic north. “20” = 200 degrees magnetic, which means that the final approach for Runway 20 is approximately 200 degrees (+/- 5 degrees).

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Runway End Identifier Lights (REILs) – Two high-intensity sequenced strobe lights that help pilots identify a runway end during landing in darkness or poor visibility.

Runway Object Free Area (OFA) – A defined area surrounding a runway that should be free of any obstructions that could interfere with aircraft operations. The dimensions for the OFA increase for runways accommodating larger or faster aircraft.

Runway Protection Zone (RPZ) – A trapezoid-shaped area located beyond the end of a runway that is intended to be clear of people or built items. The geometry of the RPZ often coincides with the inner portion of the runway approach surface. However, unlike the approach surface, the RPZ is a defined area on the ground that does not have a vertical slope component for obstruction clearance. The size of the RPZ increases as runway approach capabilities or aircraft approach speeds increase. Previously defined as “clear zone.”

Runway Safety Area (RSA) – A symmetrical ground area extending along the sides and beyond the ends of a runway that is intended to accommodate inadvertent aircraft passage without causing damage. The dimensions for the RSA increase for runways accommodating larger or faster aircraft. FAA standards include surface condition (compaction, etc.) and absence of obstructions. Any items that must be located within an RSA because of their function (runway lights, airfield signage, wind cones, etc.) must be frangible (breakable) to avoid significant aircraft damage.

Segmented Circle – A system of visual indicators designed to show a pilot in the air the direction of the traffic pattern at that airport.

Small Aircraft – An aircraft that weighs 12,500 lbs. or less.

Straight-In Approach – An instrument approach that directs aircraft to a specific runway end.

Statute Mile – 5,280 feet (a nautical mile = 6,080 feet)

Stop and Go – An aircraft operation where the aircraft lands and comes to a full stop on the runway before takeoff is initiated.

T-Hangar – A rectangular aircraft storage hangar with several interlocking “T” units that minimize building per storage unit. Usually two-sided with either bi-fold or sliding doors.

Takeoff Distance Available (TODA) – the length of the takeoff run available plus the length of clearway, if available.

Takeoff Run Available (TORA) – the length of runway available and suitable for the ground run of aircraft when taking off.

Taxilane – A defined path used by aircraft to move within aircraft parking apron, hangar areas and other landside facilities.

Taxiway – A defined path used by aircraft to move from one point to another on an airport.

Threshold – The beginning of that portion of a runway that is useable for landing.

Taxiway Design Group (TDG) – The TDG is based on the undercarriage dimensions of the aircraft. TDG is used to determine taxiway/taxilane width and fillet standards, and in some instances, runway to taxiway and taxiway/taxilane separation requirements.

Threshold Lights – Components of runway edge lighting system located at the ends of runways and at displaced thresholds. Threshold lights typically have split lenses (green/red) that identify the beginning and ends of usable runway.

Through-the-Fence – Term used to describe how off-airport aviation users (private airparks, hangars, etc.) access an airport “through-the-fence,” rather than having facilities located on airport property.

Tiedown – A place where an aircraft is parked and “tied down.” Surface can be grass, gravel or paved. Tiedown anchors may be permanently installed or temporary.

Touch and Go – An aircraft operation involving a landing followed by a takeoff without the aircraft coming to a full stop or exiting the runway.

Traffic Pattern – The flow of traffic that is prescribed for aircraft landing and taking off from an airport. Traffic patterns are typically rectangular in shape, with upwind, crosswind, base and downwind legs and a final approach surrounding a runway.

Traffic Pattern Altitude – The established altitude for a runway traffic pattern, typically 800 to 1,000 feet above ground level (AGL).

Transitional Surfaces – One of the FAR Part 77 Imaginary Surfaces, the transitional surface extend outward and upward at right angles to the runway centerline and the extended runway centerline at a slope of 7:1 from the sides of the primary surface and from the sides of the approach surfaces.

GLOSSARY OF AVIATION TERMS

Universal Communications (UNICOM) – Is an air-ground communication facility operated by a private agency to provide advisory service at uncontrolled airports.

Utility Runway – As defined under FAR Part 77, a runway designed and constructed to serve small planes (aircraft with maximum takeoff weights of 12,500 pounds or less).

Vertical Navigation (VNAV) – Vertical navigation descent data or descent path, typically associated with published GPS instrument approaches. The use of any VNAV approach technique requires operator approval, certified VNAV-capable avionics, and flight crew training.

VOR - Very High Frequency Omnidirectional Range – A ground based electronic navigational aid that transmits radials in all directions in the VHF frequency spectrum. The VOR provides azimuth guidance to aircraft by reception of radio signals.

VORTAC – VOR collocated with ultra high frequency tactical air navigation (TACAN)

Visual Approach Slope Indicator (VASI) – A system of lights located by the approach end of a runway which provides visual approach slope guidance to aircraft during approach to landing. The lights typically show some combination of green and white if a pilot is on the correct flight path, and turn red if a pilot is too low.

Visual Flight Rules (VFR) – Rules that govern the procedures to conducting flight under visual conditions. The term is also used in the US to indicate weather conditions that are equal to or greater than minimum VFR requirements. In addition, it is used by pilots and controllers to indicate type of flight plan.

Visual Guidance Indicator (VGI) – Equipment designed to provide visual guidance for pilots for landing through the use of different color light beams. Visual Approach Slope Indicators (VASI) and Precision Approach Path Indicators (PAPI) defined above are examples.

Waypoint – A specified geographical location used to define an area navigation route or the flight path of an aircraft employing area navigation.

Wide Area Augmentation System (WAAS) – GPS-based instrument approach that can provide both vertical (glideslope) and horizontal (course) guidance. WAAS-GPS approaches are able to provide approach minimums nearly comparable to a Category I Instrument Landing System (ILS).

Wind Rose – A diagram that depicts observed wind data direction and speed on a 360-degree compass rose. Existing or planned proposed runway alignments are overlain to determine wind coverage levels based on the crosswind limits of the design aircraft.

Wind Cone – A device located near landing areas used by pilots to verify wind direction and velocity. Usually manufactured with brightly colored fabric and may be lighted for nighttime visibility. Also referred to as “wind sock.”

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AC – Advisory Circular	HIRL – High Intensity Runway Lighting
AC – Asphaltic Concrete	HITL – High Intensity Taxiway Lighting
ACM – Airport Certification Manual	IFR – Instrument Flight Rules
ADG – Airplane Design Group	ILS – Instrument Landing System
ADIP – Airport Data and Information Portal	IMC – Instrument Meteorological Conditions
ADO – Airport District Office	LDA – Landing Distance Available
AGIS – Airport Geographic Information Systems	LDA - Localizer Directional Aid
AGL – Above Ground Level	LIRL – Low Intensity Runway Lighting
AIP – Airport Improvement Program	LITL – Low Intensity Taxiway Lighting
ALP – Airport Layout Plan	LNAV - Lateral Navigation
ALS – Approach Lighting System	LOC – Localizer
AOA – Airport Operations Area	LPV – Localizer Performance with Vertical Guidance
APL – Aircraft Parking Line	MALS – Medium Intensity Approach Lighting System (MALS) with Runway Alignment Indicator Lights (RAIL)
APRC – Approach Reference Code	MIRL – Medium Intensity Runway Lighting
ARC – Airport Reference Code	MITL – Medium Intensity Taxiway Lighting
ARFF – Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting	MSL – Mean Sea Level
ARP - Airport Reference Point	MTOW – Maximum Takeoff Weight
ASDA – Accelerate-Stop Distance Available	NAVAID – Navigation Aid
ASV – Annual Service Volume	NDB – Non-Directional Beacon
ATC – Air Traffic Control	NEPA – National Environmental Policy Act
ATCT – Airport Traffic Control Tower	NGS – National Geodetic Survey
ASOS – Automated Surface Observation System	NPIAS – National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems
AWOS – Automated Weather Observation System	OCS – Obstacle Clearance Surface
BRL – Building Restriction Line	ODALS – Omnidirectional Airport Lighting System
CFR – Code of Federal Regulations	OFA – Object Free Area
CTAF – Common Traffic Advisory Frequency	OFZ – Obstacle Free Zone
DPRC – Departure Reference Code	PAPI – Precision Approach Path Indicator
DME – Distance Measuring Equipment	PCC – Portland Cement Concrete
FAA – Federal Aviation Administration	PCI – Pavement Condition Index
FAR – Federal Air Regulation	PCN – Pavement Condition Number
FBO – Fixed Base Operator	POFZ – Precision Obstacle Free Zone
GIS – Geographic Information System	RAIL – Runway Alignment Indicator Lights
GS – Glide Slope	RDC – Runway Design Code
GPS – Global Positioning System	

LIST OF ACRONYMS

REIL – Runway End Identifier Lights
RNAV – Area Navigation
ROFA – Runway Object Free Area
ROFZ – Runway Obstacle Free Zone
RPZ – Runway Protection Zone
RSA – Runway Safety Area
RVR – Runway Visual Range
RVZ – Runway Visibility Zone
TDG – Taxiway Design Group
TSA- Taxiway Safety Area
TSA – Transportation Security Administration
TODA – Takeoff Distance Available
TOFA – Taxiway/Taxilane Object Free Area
TORA – Takeoff Run Available
TSS – Threshold Siting Surface
TVOR – Terminal Very High Frequency Omni-directional Range
UAS – Unmanned Aircraft Systems
UGA – Urban Growth Area
UGB – Urban Growth Boundary
UHF – Ultra-High Frequency
USDA – United States Department of Agriculture
USGS – U.S. Geological Survey
UNICOM – Universal Communications
VASI – Visual Approach Slope Indicator
VFR – Visual Flight Rules
VGI - Visual Guidance Indicators
VNAV – Vertical Navigation
VOR – Very High Frequency Omni-Directional Range