



Memorandum

U.S. Department of
Transportation

Office of the Secretary
of Transportation

Office of Inspector General

Subject: INFORMATION: Audit Announcement—
Review of FAA's Implementation of
Runway Status Lights
Project Number 07A3011A000

Date: May 21, 2007

From: David A. Dobbs 
Principal Assistant Inspector General
for Auditing and Evaluation

Reply to
Attn of: JA-10

To: Assistant Administrator for Financial Services
and Chief Financial Officer

Over half of all runway incursions (potential collisions on the ground) result from pilot deviations. However, there is currently no automated technology in place to directly warn pilots of potential runway conflicts. During our recent audit of runway incursions, officials from the Air Line Pilots Association brought a relatively new technology to our attention—Runway Status Lights (RWSL)—that could have the potential to significantly reduce runway incursions caused by pilot deviations.

RWSL is a system of automated, surveillance-driven lights that work as an independent, direct warning system to alert pilots of departing or crossing aircraft that the runway is occupied. The lights are installed at runway/taxiway intersections and at departure points along the runways. Lights illuminate red when it is unsafe to cross or depart from a runway, thus serving to increase the crew's situational awareness and decrease the potential for a runway incursion. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is currently evaluating this technology.

The Office of Inspector General plans to conduct an audit of FAA's implementation of RWSL technology. The objectives of our audit are to (1) determine the viability of RWSL as a technology for reducing runway incursions and (2) assess FAA's progress in implementing the system.

We plan to begin the audit the week of June 4, 2007, and will contact your audit liaison to schedule an entrance conference. If you have any questions or need additional information, please call Dan Raviile, Program Director, at (202) 366-1405 or Mary E. (Liz) Hanson, Project Manager, at (404) 562-3778.

#

cc: FAA Deputy Administrator
Anthony Williams, ABU-100
Martin Gertel, M-1