

Airport Glossary

TERMS:

Advisory Circular (AC): A series of external FAA publications consisting of all non-regulatory material of a policy, guidance, and informational nature.

Air Cargo: All commercial air express and air freight with the exception of air-mail and air parcel post.

Air Carrier: A commercial operator providing for the transport of passengers or property by aircraft for compensation or hire utilizing aircraft with greater than 30 seats and certificated in accordance with Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) Parts 121 or 127.

Aircraft Mix: The numerical or percentage breakdown of aircraft into categories based on aircraft engine and weight.

Aircraft Operation: Any aircraft arrival or departure including touch-and-go operations.

Aircraft Type: A distinctive model of aircraft, as designated by the manufacturer.

Airline: A scheduled air carrier certificated by the Federal Aviation Administration under Part 121 of the Federal Aviation Regulations.

Airline Operations: Takeoffs and landings performed by aircraft operated by Part 121 or 127 airlines on scheduled and non-scheduled flights.

Airport: A landing area regularly used by aircraft for receiving or discharging passengers or cargo.

Airport Service Area: The geographic area that generates demand for aviation services at an airport.

Airport Surveillance Radar (ASR): A navigation instrument used to control air traffic within the immediate airport traffic areas.

Airspace: The area above the ground in which aircraft travel. It is divided into corridors, routes, and restricted zones for the control and safety of traffic.

Air Taxi: The transport of people or property for compensation or hire by a commercial operator (not an air carrier) in an aircraft having a maximum seating capacity of 30 or less and certified under Federal Aviation Regulations Part 135.

Ambient: The sum total of existing environmental conditions for any given impact category.

Ambient Air Quality: The existing quality of the air.

Aquatic: Growing or living in or upon water.

Approach Surface: An imaginary inclined surface longitudinally centered on the extended centerline of a runway, extending outward and upward from the runway. It has a shallower gradient than the corresponding glide slope.

Apron: An area on an airport designated for the parking, loading, fueling, or servicing of aircraft.

Aviation Easement: A form of limited property right purchase that establishes legal land-use control prohibiting incompatible development of areas required for airports or aviation-related purposes.

Based Aircraft: Aircraft permanently stationed or having a long-term agreement to reside at the Airport.

Beacon: See rotating beacon.

Biotic Community: Recognizable assemblages of vegetation and wildlife organisms generally functioning as a unit.

Building Restriction Line (BRL): An imaginary line that identifies suitable building area locations on airports. The BRL is also dependent upon the Runway Visibility Zone (RVZ) and ATCT line-of-sight capabilities.

Capacity: The airport operating level, expressed as the number of aircraft movements that can occur at an airport over a specified time period.

Circling Approach: A descent used in an approved procedure to an airport for a circle to land maneuver.

Commercial Aviation: Aircraft activity licensed by state or federal authority to transport passengers and/or cargo on a scheduled or non-scheduled basis.

Community: A city, group of cities, or a Metropolitan Statistical Area receiving scheduled air service by a certificated route air carrier at an airport.

Commuter Airline: Commercial operators that operate aircraft with a maximum of 60 seats, and that provides scheduled service, or that carries mail; commuters may be either air taxis or certified air carriers.

Condemnation: Proceedings under which a property interest may be forcibly acquired; government may condemn land through the power of eminent domain; an individual may apply inverse condemnation to obtain just compensation for a property interest taken by government without prior agreement.

Conical Surface: A surface extending outward and upward from the periphery of the horizontal surface at a slope of 20 to 1 for a horizontal distance of 4,000 feet and extending to a height of 350 feet above the airport elevation.

Critical Aircraft: The most demanding category or family of aircraft that performs 500 annual itinerant operations at an airport (Also referred to as the design aircraft).

Critical Habitat: An entire habitat or portion thereof, having any constituent element that is necessary to the normal needs or survival of an endangered or threatened species.

Decibel (dB): A unit of measurement used to describe sound pressure level. It is a dimensionless unit, which is commonly

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expressed as one-tenth of the logarithm of the ratio between two power levels, one of which is nominally a reference level. The human auditory response to a given increase in sound pressure is approximately proportional to the increase in sound pressure in comparison to the pressure already present.

Displaced Threshold: Actual touchdown point on specific runways designated due to obstructions that make it impossible to use the actual physical runway end.

Distance Measuring Equipment (DME): An airborne instrument that indicates the distance the aircraft is from a fixed point, usually a VOR station.

Draft Environmental Impact Statement: FAA's initial evaluation of the environmental impact of a proposed action when coordinated pursuant to Section 102(20Cc) of NEPA is initiated.

Ecology: The science or study of the relationship between an organism and its environment.

Ecosystem: An ecological community together with its physical environment, considered as a unit.

Effective Runway Gradient: The maximum difference between runway centerline elevations divided by the runway length, expressed as a percentage.

Eminent Domain: Right of the government to take property from the owner, upon compensation, for public facilities or other purposes in the public interest.

Endangered Species: Those species in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of their range.

Enplanement: A term applying to passengers and cargo which board a departing aircraft.

Enroute Airways: The route a flight follows from departure point to destination.

Express: Property transported under published air express tariffs.

Fauna: A collective term for the animal species present in an ecosystem.

Fixed Base Operator (FBO): A private enterprise engaged in services related to general aviation, such as fuel sales, aircraft maintenance, aircraft storage, aircraft rental and sales, flight instruction, and crop dusting.

Flora: A collective term for the plant species present in an ecosystem.

Floodplain: An area that would be inundated by storm-water runoff that occurs under a given recurrent frequency flood condition.

Fleet Mix: See Aircraft Mix.

Flight Service Station (FSS): FAA facility used for pilot briefings on weather, airports, altitudes, routes, and other flight planning data.

General Aviation (GA): All aviation activities except those performed by commercial air carrier or military.

General Aviation Aircraft: All civil aircraft except those owned by and classified as air carriers.

General Obligation Bond: A form of public indebtedness backed by the full faith and credit of the municipality or other appropriate public body.

Glide Slope (GS): Electronic vertical guidance provided the pilot while on the final approach to landing; usually an angle between two degrees and three degrees and intersecting the runway at the touch down area.

Global Positioning System (GPS): Satellite-based navigation capabilities utilizing a minimum of four (4) of 26 satellites orbiting the earth.

Horizontal Surface: A horizontal plane 150 feet above the established airport elevation, the perimeter of which is constructed by swinging arcs of specified radii from the center of each end of the primary surface of each runway and connecting the adjacent arcs by tangent lines.

IFR Conditions: Weather conditions below the minimum prescribed for flight under VFR.

Indirect Source: A facility, building, structure, or installation which attracts mobile air pollution source activity that results in emissions of a pollutant for which there is a national standard.

Instrument Landing System (ILS): A landing approach system that establishes a course and a descent path to align an aircraft with a runway for final approach.

Instrument Flight Rules (IFR): Rules that govern flight procedures when ceiling and visibility are below 1,000 feet and three miles respectively.

Instrument Approach: A landing approach using electronic aids and made without visual reference to the ground.

Itinerant Operations: Arrivals and departures of aircraft to or from an area greater than 20 miles from the airport. Itinerant operations may involve an aircraft based at the airport or an aircraft from another airport.

Local Area Augmentation System (LAAS): Intended to compliment Wide Area Augmentation System (WAAS) by meeting Category II/ III instrument approach requirements, as well as provide users with all weather surface navigation, surface navigation, and surface surveillance/ traffic management system capabilities.

Localizer (LOC): An electronic instrument that is part of an ILS and emits radio signals which provide the pilot with course guidance to the runway centerline.

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Local Operations: Operations performed by aircraft that (1) operate in the local traffic pattern or within sight of the tower; (2) are known to be departing for or arriving from +/- light in local practice areas located within a 20 mile radius of the control tower; and (3) execute simulated instrument approaches or low passes at the airport.

Medium Intensity Approach Lighting System with Runway Alignment Indicator Lights (MALSR): A facility by which the pilot is provided visual reference to the instrument runway during transition from instrument to visual flight.

Microwave Landing System: An instrument landing system using VHF radio signals to guide the aircraft's approach instead of the VHF system still widely used. The microwave system provides for fewer ground reflections, takes up less space, and uses small aeriels.

Minimum Descent Altitude (MDA): The lowest altitude, expressed in feet above MSL, to which descent is authorized on final approach or during circling-to-land maneuvering in execution of a standard instrument approach procedure where no electronic glide slope is provided.

Middle Marker (MM): An electronic beacon that indicates a position approximately 3,500 feet from the landing threshold.

Military Operations: An operation by military aircraft.

Missed Approach: A prescribed procedure to be followed by aircraft that cannot complete an attempted landing at an airport.

Nautical Mile: A measure of lineal distance equal to one minute of a great circle at the equator and is the length of one minute of latitude (6,076.1155 feet). To convert to statute miles, multiply by 1.150779.

NAVAID: Any navigational aids, such as PAPI, MALS, REIL, etc.

Noise Contour: A line connecting points of equal noise exposure.

Non-precision Approach Procedure: A standard instrument approach procedure in which no electronic glide slope is provided.

Non-scheduled Service: Revenue flights that are not operated in regular scheduled service such as charter flights and all non-revenue flights incident to such flights.

Object Free Area (OFA): An area on the ground centered on the runway, taxiway, or taxilane centerline provided to enhance the safety of aircraft operations by having the area free of objects, except for objects that need to be located in the OFA for air navigation or aircraft ground maneuvering purposes.

Obstacle Free Zone (OFZ): The OFZ is the airspace below 150 feet (45m) above the established airport elevation and along the runway and extended runway centerline that is required to be clear of all objects, except for frangible visual

NAVAIDs that need to be located in the OFZ because of their function, in order to provide clearance protection for aircraft landing or departing from the runway, and for missed approaches.

Operation: Any airborne arrival or departure of an aircraft at or from an airport. "Touch-and-go" practice landings are considered as two operations.

Origination: The initial enplanement of any passengers and cargo; total originations include all enplanements except transfers and stop-overs.

Outer Marker (OM): An electronic beacon that indicates a position at which aircraft will intercept the ILS glide path.

Parts 25 and 121 Criteria: Those applicable portions of the Federal Aviation Regulations within which criteria for operational takeoff flight paths are defined.

Part 77: The applicable portions of Federal Aviation Regulations which define obstructions to air navigation.

Peak Hour: Represents that highest number of operations or passengers during the busiest hour of an average day of a peak month.

Precision Approach Path Indicator (PAPI): A lighting system providing for visual flight path, within the airport approach zone, so that an approaching pilot can establish a positive controlled descent (also VASI).

Precision Instrument: The term used to describe an approach using both horizontal and vertical guidance. This term also describes the runway with this type of approach and the markings on the runway.

Primary Runway: That runway which provides the best wind coverage, etc.; this runway receives the most usage at an airport.

Primary Surface: A surface longitudinally centered on a runway. When the runway has a hard surface, the primary surface extends 200 feet beyond each runway end; but when there is no hard surface, or planned hard surface, the primary surface ends at the end of the runway. The width of the primary surface of a runway will be that width prescribed in FAA Part 77 for the most precise existing or planned approach to that runway end.

Revenue Bonds: A form of public indebtedness backed by the revenue generated by the facility for which the debt was incurred.

Rotating Beacon: A visual NAVAID displaying flashes of white and/or colored light used to indicate the location of an airport.

Runway (RW): A defined area on an airport prepared for landing and takeoff of aircraft.

Runway Protection Zone (RPZ): An area off the runway end to enhance the protection of people and property on the ground.

Runway Safety Area: A defined surface surrounding the runway prepared or suitable for reducing the risk of damage to aircraft in the event of an overshoot, undershoot, or excursion from the runway.

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Runway Visibility Zone (RVZ): An acceptable runway profile permits any two points five feet (1.5m) above the runway centerline to be mutually visible for the entire runway length. Hence, a clear line-of-sight between the ends of the of intersecting runways is recommended. Finally, the RVZ is an area formed by the imaginary lines connecting the two runways' visibility points.

Scheduled Service: Transport service performed by a commercial operator on a regular basis.

Segmented Circle: An airport aid identifying the traffic pattern direction.

Socioeconomic: Data pertaining to the population and economic characteristics of a region.

Special Use Airspace: Airspace of defined dimensions, within which flight of aircraft, while not wholly prohibited, is subject to restrictions or to hazards that may exist to non-participating aircraft.

Straight-In Approach: A descent in an approach procedure in which the final approach course alignment and descent gradient permits authorization of straight-in landing minimums.

Student Activity: Any aviation activity by student pilots.

Taxiway (TWY): A defined area on an airport prepared for the surface movement of aircraft to and from the runway.

Terminal Airspace: The controlled airspace normally associated with aircraft departure and arrival patterns to or from airports within a terminal control system.

Terminal Building: That building on an airport which is used in making the transition between surface and air transportation.

T-Hangar: A T-shaped aircraft storage building that provides economical shelter for a single aircraft.

Threshold: The beginning of that portion of the runway available for landing. In some instances the landing threshold may be displaced.

Tie Downs: An area on an airport specifically designed for the outdoor storage of aircraft.

Total Operations: The total of all operations (domestic and international) performed at an airport.

Touch-and-Go Operations: An aircraft operation for practice or testing purposes characterized by a landing touch down and then continuing takeoff without stopping.

Traffic Pattern: The flow of traffic that is prescribed for aircraft landing at, taxiing on, or taking off from an airport.

Transition Surface: An imaginary surface extending to the sides of the approach surface and inclined at a specified

gradient 90 degrees to the extended centerline of the runway. Any object penetrating this surface would be an obstruction to air navigation.

Turnaround: A pavement area designed for turning around or holding aircraft at the end of a runway when a full parallel taxiway is not provided.

UNICOM: A ground radio communications station that provides pilots with pertinent airport information at specific airports.

Visual Approach Slope Indicator (VASI): A lighting system providing a visual flight path, within the airport approach zone, so that an approaching pilot can establish a more positive controlled descent (also PAPI).

Vector: A heading issued to an aircraft to provide navigational guidance by radar.

Visual Flight Rules (VFR): Rules under which aircraft are operated by visual reference to the ground, and fly on a "see and be seen" principle.

Very High Frequency Omni-Directional Range (VOR): Air navigation aid that provides bearing information to aircraft.

Wide Area Augmentation System (WAAS): Planned as a GPS augmentation by providing users with the use of GPS for all phases of flight from the en route environment to Category 1 precision instrument approaches. Thereby, providing more direct routing of aircraft, saving time, fuel, and money.

Wind Cone (Sock): Conical wind direction indicator.

Wind Coverage: Refers to orientation of runway in relationship to direction of prevailing winds (concerns usability of runway for takeoffs and landings).

Wind Rose: A diagram indicating the prevalence of winds from various directions, at a specific place.

Wind Tee: A visual device used to advise pilots about wind direction.

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ACRONYM

AC:	Advisory Circular	OAG:	Official Airline Guide
ADF:	Automatic Direction Finder	OC:	Obstruction Chart
AGL:	Above Ground Level	OFA:	Object Free Area
AIP:	Airport Improvement Program	OFZ:	Obstacle Free Zone
ASR:	Airport Surveillance Radar	OM:	Outer Marker
ALP:	Airport Layout Plan	OPBA:	Operations Per Based Aircraft
ALS:	Approach Lighting System	PAPI:	Precision Approach Path Indicators
ARFF:	Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting	PIR:	Precision Instrument
ARTCC:	Air Route Traffic Control Center	PLASI:	Pulsating Light Approach Slope Indicator
ASDA:	Accelerate – Stop Distance Available	RAIL:	Runway Alignment Indicator Lights
ASV:	Annual Service Volume	REIL:	Runway End Identifier Lights
ATC:	Air Traffic Control	RNAV:	Area Navigation
ATCT:	Air Traffic Control Tower	RPZ:	Runway Protection Zone
AWOS:	Automated Weather Observing System	RVR:	Runway Visibility Range
BRL:	Building Restriction Line	RVZ:	Runway Visibility Zone
BWR:	Bucher, Willis & Ratliff Corporation	RW:	Runway
CAT:	Category	SSALF:	Simplified Short Approach Light System with sequenced Flasher Lights
CWY:	Clearway	SSALR:	Simplified Short Approach Light System with RAIL
dB:	Decibel	TACAN:	Tactical Air Navigation
DME:	Distance Measuring Equipment	TAP:	Terminal Area Plan
DNL:	Day/Night Average Sound Level	TCA:	Terminal Control Area
DOT:	Department of Transportation	TERPS:	Terminal Instrument Procedures
FAA:	Federal Aviation Administration	TVOR:	Terminal Very High Frequency Omni Range
FAR:	Federal Aviation Regulation	TW:	Taxiway
FIS:	Federal Inspection Service	UHF:	Ultra-High Frequency
FBO:	Fixed Base Operator	USGS:	United States Geological Survey
FSS:	Flight Service Station	VASI:	Visual Approach Slope Indicator
FTZ:	Foreign Trade Zone	VFR:	Very High Frequency
GA:	General Aviation	VMC:	Visual Meteorological Conditions
GPS:	Global Positioning System	VOR:	VHF Omni-Directional Range
GVGI:	Generic Visual Slope Indicator	WAAS:	Wide Area Augmentation System
GS:	Glide Slope		
HIRL:	High Intensity Runway Lights		
HUD:	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development		
IFR:	Instrument Flight Rules		
ILS:	Instrument Landing System		
IMC:	Instrument Meteorological Conditions		
INM:	Integrated Noise Model		
KHz:	Kilohertz		
LAAS:	Local Area Augmentation System		
LDA:	Landing Distance Available		
LIRL:	Low Intensity Runway Lights		
LOC:	Localizer		
MALSF:	Medium Intensity Approach Lighting System		
MALSR:	Medium Intensity Approach Lighting System with Runway Alignment Indicator Lights		
MDA:	Minimum Descent Altitude		
MHz:	Megahertz		
MIRL:	Medium Intensity Runway Lights		
MITL:	Medium Intensity Taxiway Lights		
MM:	Middle Marker		
MOA:	Military Operations Area		
MSA:	Metropolitan Statistical Area		
MSL:	Mean Sea Level		
NAVAID:	Navigational Aid		
NDB:	Non-directional Beacon		
NOS:	National Ocean Survey		
NPI:	Non-precision Instrument		
NPIAS:	National Plan of Integrated Airport System		
NWS:	National Weather Service		