

## Winter Operations: Air Traffic Controller's Perspective

The importance of a clear and established procedure to convey to the Airport Authority what's going on during winter operations isn't just an annual thing. You want to be able to do it on a daily basis based on the conditions that are happening right now, to get the pilot, the city, and the other air traffic facilities the most up-to-date information.

Timely and accurate braking action reports and PIREPs are very important for the airport operation, because pilots are expecting to know the conditions in which they're going to land. If a pilot lands on a runway under conditions that he was not prepared for, it could easily lead to a runway excursion because the pilot was using thrusters or brakes at a level that were not appropriate to the conditions. The dissemination of this information in winter operations to include braking action and runway condition reports is very key. It starts with the tower, and then it gets to the TRACON, and then it gets to the en route. By doing that, it allows the pilot to have the most opportunity, the most time, to plan for the approach, plan for the conditions of the airport, thusly reducing the likelihood of a runway excursion.

A close working relationship with the Airport Authority during winter operations is probably the key element to making sure winter snow removal operations are successful. The last thing that the airport wants is for pilots to be using untimely information which could lead to a runway excursion because the pilot thought that a runway was in better condition than the actual elements provided him. The pre-season meeting that occurs between ATC and the Airport Authority is very key in that not only Air Traffic gets input, but the Airport Authority also gets input into the plan of the airport -- what's going to be plowed first, what's more important to air traffic aspect, as far as runways or taxiways, high speeds versus 90-degree turns. Very important, because that allows us as a high speed during winter operations, that's a much easier turn than a 90-degree, which would prevent a runway excursion during winter operations.

The other integral part is the post-season meeting -- at that time -- or the post-event meeting. And at that point, that's when Air Traffic and the Airport Authority get back together and determine what worked well, what didn't work well, for the next season or the next snow event. We can then tweak the plan as we move along.

It's the responsibility of all the elements in Air Traffic Control to provide the pilots with as much information as they can as weather deteriorates. It's important for the tower to pass back the information to the TRACON and the en-route environment so that they can have the pilots informed as early as possible that the landing situation might not be optimal, and the pilot can prepare accordingly.