

Winter Operations: Airport Operations Perspective

Communication and teamwork between the ATC and CDA is imperative in our snow-removal operation. It is the ATC that creates the gaps for us to efficiently remove the snow on runways. It is our duty to remove the snow. We communicate, giving it back once it is complete and done, with the hopes of reducing the likelihood of excursions on the runway.

Getting PIREPs is very important from the Air Traffic Control tower. They basically give us a baseline, as far as what we need to do, as far as what type of response we need to send to the runway, be it to be broom, de-ice, or just do a regular Mu reading on there to see what type of condition we may have.

During winter weather, field condition NOTAMs are extremely important in mitigating runway excursions. When the airfield operations personnel drives a runway to check the conditions, the quicker we can get that to the pilots, the better it is.

Pre-season and post-season meetings are very important with the ATC and the airport operators for a various number of reasons. You get to know as you're talking to them what worked well during the season and what did not work as well.

Here at O'Hare Airport, we have a unique situation where we have a senior operations personnel in the control tower, where he disseminates and shares information on field conditions, PIREPs, and the conditions of the runway. This, in turn, helps the pilots, airport operators, and the snow teams operate more efficiently and effectively.