

# The Manager's Approach



---

Vol. 8 Issue 4

Columbia & Pine Mountain Lake Airports

June/July, 2009

---

## *Runway Safety Area, Object Free Area, & Protection Zone*

Pilots see a runway as a piece of improved ground on which they operate their aircraft. It may seem like a pretty simple design, but the runway is actually made up of several different components including:

- Markings & Signage
- Lighting
- Exits
- Runway safety area
- Runway protection zone
- Object free area (OFA)

I would like to briefly talk about the Object Free Area and its importance to pilots, pedestrians and airport safety.

One of the most important markings are the runway hold lines. This is a double solid double dashed line. All aircraft should stay on the taxiway side of the hold line until they are ready to access the runway. The runway hold line is located 125' from the center of the runway, and is also the width of the Object Free Area making it easy to visualize the edge of the Object Free Area if you are at a runway exit. All vehicles and pedestrians should remain outside the Object Free Area unless crossing the runway. Statistically, the Object Free Area is a high risk area because aircraft in trouble are likely to swerve off the runway into the Object Free Area.

One of the most frequent safety issues encountered is people, vehicles and aircraft being in the Object Free Area. The Airports Department personnel keep an eye out for people and vehicles in the Object Free Area and when found, the people are requested to stay outside of the Object Free Area. Any vehicle or aircraft that is on the parallel

taxiway will be outside the Object Free Area. Arriving aircraft should taxi off the runway exit beyond the Runway Hold Line before they stop to reconfigure the aircraft so that they are clear of the Object Free Area. In the interest of safety, all bicycles and pedestrians should travel along the edge of the taxiway that is furthest from the runway. When an aircraft approaches on the taxiway the bicycles and pedestrians should move off the pavement into the gravel and stop until the aircraft passes. This removes any uncertainty in the mind of the pilot as to what the bicycle or pedestrian may do.

Help keep our airports safe and stay out of the Object Free Area unless crossing the runway.

---

## *CTAF Practices*

Just a few years ago we changed the Columbia Airport CTAF frequency to reduce the congestion caused by several airports using the same frequency. Now Columbia only shares 122.975 with McClellan Airport. Not having as much radio traffic opens up the opportunity for "chitchat" and inappropriate conversation over the radio. The CTAF should be used to communicate a pilots intent and also provide useful information regarding weather and other conditions that may help other pilots.

---

## *Noise Sensitive Areas*

As a reminder to our local pilots, we have several noise sensitive areas near our airports. Maps showing these areas are posted at both airports. Please be neighborly and avoid these areas.

## *Father's Day Fly-In*

Thanks to cool weather and a lot of energetic volunteers this year's Father's Day Fly-In was fun and safe. We had 50 aircraft parked in the grass on Saturday in addition to four rows of display aircraft. All the vendors reported record sales and several even sold out their entire inventory. I want to especially thank the Co-Chairs that have been working on the Fly-In since last January. These people are:

Ed Sunday – Ramp Boss

Alan Wallace – Air Boss

Lorraine Martinelli – Fund Raising & Warbirds

Del Chase - Safety

Jack Scialabba – Transportation

Jan & Bruce Watson – Hospitality

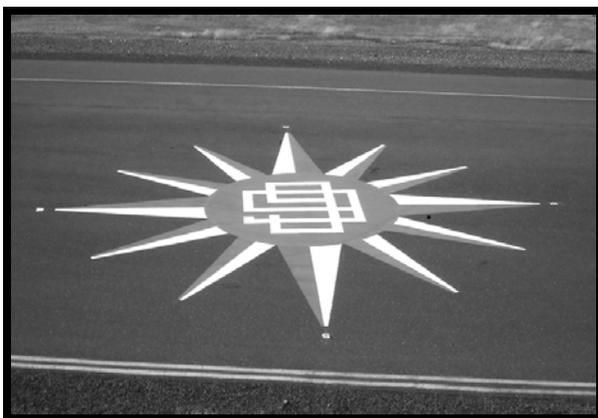
Joe Day – Website

The FAA controllers also reported that it was one of the best run events they have participated in. I want to extend my thanks to everyone that volunteered or participated in this year's Fly-In.

---

## *Pine Mountain Lake Airport Receives New Compass Rose*

Another excellent volunteer effort added a new compass rose in the Runway 27 run-up area at the Pine Mountain Lake Airport. The compass rose was painted by the San Joaquin Valley Chapter of the 99s under the excellent coordination and leadership of Dianne Cole.



## *Stupid Pilot Tricks*

### *Situational Awareness*

Flying an airplane requires that the pilot mentally manage several dimensions at all times. The obvious is the up and down dimension, but there are also the dimensions of speed and heading that has to be managed. Knowing where you are in this multi dimensional space and knowing where you will be in the next few minutes is part of a skill pilots call "Situational Awareness".

An important aspect of "Situational Awareness" is visualizing where other aircraft are in relationship to your own and how that will change in the next few minutes. In the airport environment this information usually comes from pilots broadcasting their position and intentions over the radio. This all sounds good until someone is not sure of their location and they make an error in their position report, or they don't broadcast over the radio at all.

I've noticed that once in a while a pilot will be listening to the radio and understand that the traffic at the airport is using a particular runway and they establish in their mind that they are going to use the same runway. However, sometimes a pilot's "Situational Awareness" gets twisted around and they end up actually flying a pattern and landing on the opposite runway. This can lead to some surprises and even some interesting radio conversation, and is also why we are taught to look out the window for traffic.

I think that "Situational Awareness" is something that has to be regularly practiced, otherwise the skill becomes rusty. Good "Situational Awareness" is key to being a good safe pilot.

*The Manager's Approach is a monthly publication from the Tuolumne County Airports Director for the purpose of keeping our community informed of local aviation and airport issues. You can contact me at:*

Tuolumne County Airports Department  
Jim Thomas, Airports Director  
10723 Airport Road, Columbia, CA 95310  
209-533-5685

[jthomas@co.tuolumne.ca.us](mailto:jthomas@co.tuolumne.ca.us)