



**Operations Notice Number: 01/2018**

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Incorrect Airport Surface Approaches and Landings</b>
<b>Applicable to:</b>	<b>All Operators</b>
<b>Effective date:</b>	<b>25 May 2018</b>
<b>Expiry:</b>	<b>Until Further Notice</b>
<b>Authorized by:</b>	<b>Senior Vice President Safety and Flight Operations (SFO) IATA</b>
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## **Background**

A review of data from various publicly available sources shows a potential increasing operational trend of approaches lined up with an incorrect surface, meaning an incorrect runway or a taxiway. Based on this information, IATA has explored the issue further and sees the need for greater awareness in the “Areas of Vulnerability” that can lead to these events.

It should be noted that, although the attention on these events is often focused on specific operations, in most cases, deeper analysis shows that there can be latent conditions leading to the events. For this reason IATA is working with stakeholders around the globe to better understand the relevant factors involved.

Some leading organizations have also identified the same trend and have already taken practical steps to raise awareness on the issue.

## **Available Information Resources and Operational Recommendations**

On 2nd October 2017 the United States Federal Aviation Administration Safety Team (FAAST) published a [notice](#) advising of an increase in “Wrong Surface Landing Incidents” in the National Airspace System (NAS). In response to this risk the FAA has also published [SAFO 17010](#) and, similarly, EASA has published [SIB 2018-06](#) ‘Incorrect Airport Surface Approaches and Landings’.

This is not a new issue as the taxiway landings investigated by the UK AAIB at London Gatwick by a [BAC 1-11 in 1988](#) and a [B737 in 1993](#) indicate. As this type of event appears to be occurring more frequently in our aviation system, IATA would like to bring this to the attention of operators.

Operators should consider the recommendations in the FAA SAFO 17010 and the EASA SIB 2018-06 and evaluate these through their SMS processes to mitigate their specific identified operational risk to a level that is as low as reasonably practical.



Operators are also reminded that:

Acceptance of a visual approach transfers responsibility to the flight crew for safe navigation to the completion of the flight..

Analysis of accident data indicates a strong correlation between the absence of precision approach aids and approach and landing accidents.

Analysis of events also suggests that under certain conditions there may be an increased risk of a wrong surface landing incident, such as at night, or in low visibility conditions.

High levels of situational awareness and flight crew RTF discipline are essential during these scenarios. Therefore, additional factors should be considered, such as approaches conducted during the flight crew Window of Circadian Low should be identified by the operators SMS and strategic or operational counter measures applied.

Another factor in these events is expectation bias, for example, where the flight crew expect to see a certain configuration on approach, but the actual configuration is different from what they are used to seeing. It is therefore critical that the lighting configuration of the airport is understood and cross-checked with ATC.

Operators should identify those airports where the risk of such events may be elevated by design, signage, lighting, construction work in progress and including, but not limited to those airports with closely-spaced parallel runways and taxiways. Flight crews should be informed accordingly through briefing, training and and/or procedures.

Strong consideration should also be given to refusing a late, unexpected, side step to a parallel runway where it significantly increases crew workload at a critical phase of flight and is determined by the flight crew to reduce safety margins

Rigorous application of Standard Operating Procedures, including a thorough approach briefing on the expected runway and visual cues, application of Crew Resource Management principles and a high standard of communication between pilot flying and pilot monitoring are strong mitigations to the risk of misidentifying the runway surface.

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## **Conclusion**

This information is provided to enhance safety awareness, promote safe operations and prevent lining up with, or landing on, an incorrect surface. Members are requested to encourage flight crews to continue reporting safety events and any issues which they believe could lead to an incorrect landing surface event.